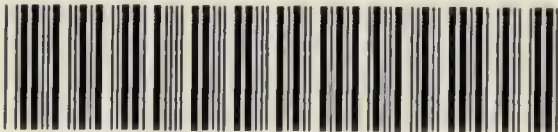


# HUMAN MOTIVES



JAMES JACKSON PUTNAM

ND	2870	ND
	THE CHARLES MYERS LIBRARY	
	Spearman Collection	
	NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL PSYCHOLOGY	
ND		ND




22500449208

Med  
K40163

~~5F 24~~

GM



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2017 with funding from  
Wellcome Library

<https://archive.org/details/b29816506>

# HUMAN MOTIVES



MIND AND HEALTH SERIES

*Edited by H. Addington Bruce, A.M.*

---

# HUMAN MOTIVES

BY

JAMES JACKSON PUTNAM, M.D.

PROFESSOR EMERITUS, DISEASES OF THE NERVOUS  
SYSTEM, HARVARD UNIVERSITY



BOSTON

LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY

1917

1915

Copyright, 1915,  
BY LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY.

*All rights reserved*

WELLCOME INSTITUTE LIBRARY	
Coll.	WelMOMec
Coll.	
No.	WIN

Set up and electrotyped by J. S. Cushing Co., Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.  
Presswork by S. J. Parkhill & Co., Boston, Mass., U.S.A.



## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS is one of a series of handbooks designed to extend knowledge of the important discoveries affecting individual and social welfare that have been made during recent years through psychological research. Most of the books in the series will deal with special problems as illumined by the results of investigations aiming directly at their solution. But the present volume is of a more general character, having as its main purpose the focusing of attention on the aid afforded by modern psychology to the upbuilding of a really sound and practical philosophy of life.

Undoubtedly the outstanding feature of the psychological researches of the past

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

quarter of a century has been the exploration of that vast, and previously almost unknown, region of the human mind termed "the subconscious." The discovery that complicated mental processes may, and constantly do, go on beneath the threshold of consciousness, and that these processes include a dynamic action perpetually and profoundly affecting "the conscious self" for good or for ill, has led to further discoveries that have already been turned to good account.

Particularly helpful has been the demonstration of the permanency of the experience and memories of the first years of life, and the rôle played by them as determinants of adult character, behavior, and health. There has even come into being a new department of medicine, based on this proved relationship of subconscious memories and certain maladies — the psychoneuroses, or functional nervous and mental disorders.

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

But it is not only to the physician that the exploration of the subconscious has been of great helpfulness. Its results are equally important to the parent, the educator, the social reformer. Indeed, as Doctor Putnam makes clear, they are of prime significance to all of us.

For one thing, knowledge of them gives us a far better understanding of ourselves and our fellows, thereby leading to greater insight into means of self-improvement, and leading also to a more tolerant and just view of those about us. And, fully as important, the results of modern investigation of the subconscious point the way, when properly considered, to a surer grasp of the meaning of the universe and our own place in it. They have, that is to say, a philosophical and spiritual as well as a psychological value.

This it is Doctor Putnam's effort to establish, and the result is a volume that should bring encouragement to all oppressed

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

by the seeming impossibility of reconciling the intuitions of religious faith with the dictates of modern science. That the findings of the field of science — medical psychology — in which Doctor Putnam himself has so long and ably labored, tend to reinforce, not weaken, religious conviction, is his firm belief; and he has presented his reasons for this belief with admirable candor and force.

Apart from this larger aspect, his book is of direct value to his readers because of the light it throws on the subject with which it is primarily concerned — human motives. The hidden impulses that so often hurry us to rash actions; the weeds in our minds that need to be uprooted lest they obtain a fatal dominance over our constructive energies; the secret sources of harmful habits — on all of these Doctor Putnam turns the revealing gleam of psychological analysis.

Throughout he rightly emphasizes the

## EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION

importance of studying motives with reference to the dynamic forces that underlie them, rather than with reference to their face value; and, attacking them from this better point of view, he brings to every reader a message of personal importance.

H. ADDINGTON BRUCE.



## PREFACE

### *De potiori designatio*

(An act or motive is not clearly understood until it has been defined in terms of its most significant meanings.)

THE practical importance for the study of motives of the sentiment that this Latin line so tersely renders, has impressed itself strongly on my mind in the course of the past two years. During this period I have had occasion to study men's motives at close range, and have become convinced that in order to understand them fully one should define them very clearly in such terms as will indicate the greatest dangers and the best hopes toward which they point. Motives



## PREFACE

are at best such mixed affairs, and the chances are so many for deceiving ourselves as to the deeper bearings of our thoughts and acts, that the temptation instinctively to take advantage of one or another of these opportunities is almost irresistible.

One of the most striking ways in which men acknowledge the ties that bind them to their fellows is through accepting social standards in the interpretation of their own intentions. The conventions of society endorse or justify many an act and many a failure to act, behind which motives lie which in the case of one or another given person may be of a sort that social conventions did not and could not contemplate. A word or act that means little to one person may thrill with emotion for another, and no general rule as to their use or avoidance could possibly be adopted. Every one must judge for himself in such matters, but to do this in any thorough-going fashion, — to the ex-



## PREFACE

tent, for example, of espousing an unpopular cause, or of seeing through and perhaps abandoning a strong prejudice, or of assuming voluntarily a serious responsibility; — to do this means to prove oneself possessed of unusual strength of character and will. The situation here involved is made more complex through the fact that while the temptation is strong to shrink from assuming full responsibility for our acts and from facing out our obscurer and deeper-lying motives, it is an easy matter, by going a short distance in these directions, to persuade ourselves that we have gone a long distance. And it is easy also to utilize self-blame in such a way as to secure a sense of satisfaction through which no real change of temperament is brought about.

For reasons such as these, and especially in view of a series of important practical investigations to which attention will be called, it has seemed to me worth while

## PREFACE

to emphasize the importance of training ourselves to see, gleaming through our immediate and partial motives, a background of stronger tendencies from which these motives derive their main significance. I believe, on the one hand, that men are more strongly bound than they usually recognize, by a sense of obligations definable as "ideal." Whatever name one may choose for these ties, they are virtually religious in their nature, and the recognition of them often gives rise to a feeling of new birth. The sense of these obligations, even though unacknowledged or denied, makes itself felt through the host of lesser motives.

On the other hand, men are handicapped by passions, longings, personal ambitions, cravings for success and mastery, to a degree of which they are never wholly conscious. Not only a portion of men's acts but all of them derive some coloring from these sources. The influences under-

## PREFACE

lying them are not to be designated as bad, but as tendencies needing to be appreciated and utilized in the service of progress of the best sort.

Such progress implies constant re-interpretation of our motives with reference both to the desires and instincts which belong to us by virtue of our evolutionary history and those which belong to us by virtue of our social relationships, construed in the widest possible sense.

In the first chapter I propose to carry further the description of these two main sources of motives, and to indicate the relative significance of the two corresponding modes of approach to the study of them, — namely, the philosophic and the psycho-analytic methods.

The second chapter will take up the relation of the individual to the creative energy which underlies the universe. This will be done for the purpose of suggesting a rational basis for the religious concep-

## PREFACE

tions which are taken as constituting one source of human motives.

In the third chapter the history of the psycho-analytic movement will be given at greater length.

In the fourth chapter some of the principles brought to light through psycho-analysis and their interest for educators will be pointed out.

In the fifth chapter a number of questions already discussed will be taken up afresh on the basis of certain simple diagrams.

In the sixth chapter it will be shown that human progress is to be regarded as equivalent to the discovery of new relationships between the inner world of one's own spirit and the world of empirical experience.

JAMES JACKSON PUTNAM, M.D.

APRIL 12, 1915.

# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION . . .	v
PREFACE . . . . .	xi
I. MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES . . .	1
II. THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION .	35
III. THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT .	67
IV. EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS OF PSYCHO- ANALYSIS . . . . .	105
V. INSTINCTS AND IDEALS . . . . .	134
VI. AN ATTEMPT AT SYNTHESIS . . . . .	165
INDEX . . . . .	177



# HUMAN MOTIVES

## CHAPTER I

### *Main Sources of Motives*

“A political victory, a rise of rents, the recovery of your sick or the return of your absent friend, or some other favorable event raises your spirits, and you think good days are preparing for you. Do not believe it. Nothing can bring you peace but yourself. Nothing can bring you peace but the triumph of principles.”

— R. W. EMERSON.

**I**N spite of the innumerable partial influences in obedience to which we act, our motives are mainly traceable to the conjoined action of two different and apparently antagonistic sets of tendencies, related to our rational aspirations on the one hand and to our emotional repressions on the other. To define these tendencies



## HUMAN MOTIVES

in such a way as to bring out the contrast between them, yet with the aim of showing that the differences underlying this contrast are susceptible of being reconciled in a new and rational synthesis, is the purpose of this book.

I shall call these two sorts of motives, provisionally, motives of constructiveness and motives of adaptation, but it will appear that the sources from which they spring are not fully indicated by these names. A motive summarizes the life history of the individual who entertains it, and, like the individual himself, may be said to stand at the point of intersection of numerous lines of energy, each of which

“Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar.”

The main lines of energy with which a man must reckon represent, on the one hand, his evolutionary, biologic history, with all that that implies in the way of half-blind self-assertion, temptation, struggle, victory, and



## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

defeat; and, on the other hand, his spiritual history, — that is, his relationship to the life of the universe as a whole. To feel the right to assert this relationship and the ability to recognize its bearings entails on human beings the same sort of responsibility that the members of an intrinsically noble family feel with regard to the maintenance of its traditions. “*Noblesse oblige.*”

Really to know a thing or to understand a situation means more than to be able to recognize it when met again. It means to know what it stands for and what it may lead to, to be acquainted with its history, and to appreciate as the essential element in that history the creative energy which made the thing or situation what it is, and which has a significance far transcending the meaning of this particular and partial manifestation of its capacity to create.

This principle is peculiarly important where motives are in question. That which one most needs to know about a man is

## HUMAN MOTIVES

his deeper-lying trends of character and their source. This knowledge is difficult to gain, but the search is of a worthy sort and should not be hampered by the passing of judgments which might have been deferred. Praising and blaming, whether of others or of oneself, often imply motives which are not what they appear to be. We ought to take sides definitely, for good and against evil. But in order to do this to good purpose we need to have a more realizing sense of the nature and the history of our own personal tendencies—both the influences that imprison us within the toils of self-indulgence and those that make us free—and of the same and kindred tendencies in the history of mankind.

It usually happens that men are moved by broader and better motives than they are consciously aware of, and that to be so moved is, virtually, to acknowledge obligations of which the final implication can be expressed only in ideal terms.

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

We are told by botanists that the rootlets of many plants extend far more widely than an ordinary inspection would suggest. Between the rows in our vegetable gardens delicate fibrils are said to extend to such a distance and in such fineness that only special methods of investigation are able to detect them; and yet their existence is important for the well-being of the plant to which they lead. But if the plant is dependent upon what happens in these distant and unseen fibrils, so, a thousand times more and in a far more complex sense, are the trends of character, temperament, and desire of a human being determined by the unseen rootlets of emotional interest that extend far around him into the remotest corner of his past life, into the lives of other men and into a foreshadowed life that he can call, inferentially, his own. Emerson has said, with just insight: "The fiend that man harries is love of the best." It is, however,

## HUMAN MOTIVES

equally true that he is harried by a half-knowledge of his hampering and repressed desires. Between these two poles he moves, and from their influence his various motives gain their strength.

The instinctive, though unspoken, recognition of the first of these poles of origin is affirmed by men's willingness to live and to die for results that they can never see, and could not possibly define unless by saying, perhaps, that they knew in what direction and in obedience to what principles these ends were to be sought. When one looks closely at the influences that inspire to patriotism, for example, it becomes clear that behind the love of country there lies a love of humanity and justice and freedom. Lovelace's inspiring lines,

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,  
Lov'd I not honour more,"

express a range of thought analogous to many that pass unexpressed. But the best final term of such thoughts is not

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

always held before the mind; nor is it sufficiently realized to what extent these broader motives are mixed with others, which are mischievous largely because they are unconsciously entertained and are therefore unregulated by the conscious reason.

To ask what this best final term would be is virtually equivalent to asking whether there is any rational goal of human life. This question can, I think, be confidently answered. But the acknowledgement of such a goal would imply the conscious acknowledgement of ideal relationships, definable in religious terms, though equally susceptible of philosophic definition.

Beyond the communities and social groups with which we are familiar and which we feel ourselves under obligation to uphold, it is easy to imagine others which we can conceive of as, in a practical sense, still better, and to recognize that in them the higher, more constructive qualities of men fashioned like ourselves



## HUMAN MOTIVES

would find a freer chance of expression. But, as beyond this humanly possible community we must believe in the existence of an ideal community, just as beyond the picturable world of time and space we must believe in the existence of an unpicturable world of power, made intelligible to us through the sense that we have of our own constructive powers.

Constructiveness is seen to the best advantage in the daily affairs of life at those moments when the reason, the intuition, and the will place the individual nearest to his ideal best. Only then can he accomplish the utmost of which he is capable toward the establishment of the best tendencies in human affairs. But "the best in oneself" is only to be stated in terms of a creative energy greater than can find expression in any finite life.

The question as to what one ought to consider the final measure of constructiveness, — that is, the question as to the final

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

standard by which one may regulate one's motives and deeds, — does not admit, indeed, of an answer that would be acceptable to all persons; but the basis for an answer is given through the study of one's own intelligence, freedom, and will. We live in a social world of persons and recognize that we are bound to some of them by mutual interest and affection. It is not only to these persons as standing for themselves alone, however, that we are bound, but still more to them as representing the forces that help to make them what they are and that underlie our own lives, — the forces represented by the ties of family, church, state. But these bonds pass over into still wider bonds, ideally definable, and there is no rational stopping-place until one reaches the point of vantage whence it is possible to see clearly that there are ties which bind all the parts of our universe, apparently so shifting and incongruous, into one. When the true nature of these

## HUMAN MOTIVES

ties is seen, many of the incongruities may be found to result from the freedom inherent in the parts of this system of things. For if freedom is present at all, it must be present everywhere. The excellence that we conceive of is an excellence that we can approach in practice. And if it thus exists in us it must exist in some sense, in the universe of which we are a part.

How little are most of us aware of the existence and availability of these great forces of creative energy! Why is this so? What is the nature and what the origin of the tangle of hampering influences by which we are encompassed, and which prevent us from being what we might otherwise become? This inquiry brings us face to face with the second class of motives, and a hint as to its answer is given in the very eagerness that prompts the question. Men are creatures of longing, and they would never do their best if this were not the case. This longing



## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

may be based on a genuine and intense desire for the accomplishment of what their intelligence and reason stamp as best; or it may be a longing for personal gratification and ambition.

The power which should show itself in deeds of the best sort often evaporates in the expression of a sentiment that describes how fine such deeds would be if done. Strong and elusive passions are at work in us which we must learn to utilize for good ends, at the cost, if we do not, of seeing them master us in the interests of ends that are undesirable. It is as if antagonistic groups of spirits were competing eagerly for the control of our motives and emotions and even of our thoughts and acts. These spirits are our better selves and our less good selves, or our more mature and relatively immature selves, striving for mastery. The person who chooses the expedient and sets aside the better is not simply one who fails to

## HUMAN MOTIVES

do his best ; he is one who virtually accepts the domination of something in himself of which he hardly realizes the presence or the force, and who yields to the strong pull of an instinctive longing which demands an outlet and of which it is our business to understand the nature.

The motives of every one of us vary extremely in detail, according to the particular circumstances which give rise to them ; the point of essential interest is, however, that they are very apt to imply the presence of repressed emotions of which we are unconscious but which nevertheless live within us as relatively independent, active agents that can exert a strong influence on our conduct and our thoughts.

This situation will be made clearer if we pause to consider under what conditions the conflicts and repressions arise, in dealing with which men have to call compromises and adaptations to their aid. Stated in broad terms, it may be said that

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

all created beings have a certain amount of freedom, and that by virtue of this freedom their interests are bound to clash. This freedom, furthermore, applies not alone to men themselves, regarded as units, but also to the thoughts and emotions of men, especially those that, having been expelled (through "repression") from the society of that special group of feelings which we elect to call "ourselves," become organized and systematized into "complexes," — somewhat as the Miltonic Satan, cast out of heaven, organized himself in hell. The difference between a "complex" and a person is immense, in detail; but the resemblance is also well defined, and a certain amount of individuality and freedom may be ascribed to the former as well as to the latter.

The reason that "repression" gains its position of importance in our lives is that there are many emotional desires which make a strong appeal yet which the de-

## HUMAN MOTIVES

mands of social convention and our own consciences forbid us openly to acknowledge. The repression of an emotion does not mean necessarily its elimination. On the contrary, it may secure its preservation in a very undesirable and deeply rooted form. Prejudices are based upon repression, and every one is aware how utterly unreasonable they are, how they resist the educative influences of experience, and with what virulence they inject themselves into our lives and hamper or modify our judgments. The same is true of superstition. Into a world of social conventions every child is born, but he is born, too, with a capacity to entertain longings and cravings. We wish for pleasure; we find that we must conform to rules. The result is the adoption of compromises in which both pleasure and conformity find themselves represented, even if only by the aid of symbols.

It must be clearly understood, as a

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

fact of great significance, that a man is never exclusively the expression of his own ideals, a disembodied soul nourishing itself on inspiration and the worship of the best. On the contrary, he has a body and an evolutionary history, a strong sense of separate individuality and physiological needs. But these conditions of existence, if in one sense they antagonize the influence of the spirit which is immanent in all men and which keeps alive in them an ideal of brotherhood, are nevertheless capable of making that brotherhood more real in another way. Limitation is the necessary condition of effort and the results of limitation figure, inevitably, sometimes as good, sometimes as evil. Even our ideals would not have their present form were it not that our lot is cast in a world of limitation, in which progress is possible only through conscious effort, compromise and adaptation.

But compromise and adaptation have a



## HUMAN MOTIVES

deep root also in the egoistic desires of infancy, when cultivated too much in and for themselves and too little as a bridge leading to better things. Even the best men and women may be torn by the conflicts to which the cravings of infantile origin gave rise, and some of the fine persons whom Dante places in his Hell or allows to toil painfully up the steep sides of the Hill of Purgatory are of this description. Society demands loyalty and severely punishes its disloyal members, even though the tendency to be disloyal may have overwhelmed them unawares. That these cravings have this consequence needs emphasis; for so conspicuously necessary and useful are acts done under the influence of motives of compromise and adaptation that it is difficult to get a hearing for the arguments which show in what subtle ways, and yet with what poignant force, they are apt to make themselves our masters and to restrain

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

us from allowing our best desires to rule. Endowed with freedom as we are, and compelled by our own nature to bring into existence and to maintain as fantasies, groups of thoughts and emotions which, in their turn, are relatively free, we do not realize that our own creations may become our tyrants, — our Frankensteins. In a measure, these dangers are the school-masters of the child. Old or young, in order to succeed, we must court danger and failure, must assert ourselves, and must abandon the hope of certainty. In compensation for this sacrifice we gain the chance to enjoy a growing sense of strength, the perception, as we grow older, of light breaking on the darkness, the feeling of constantly increasing companionship, and the evidence that in some sense our journey may have a reasonable end. But at every stage of the journey we are obliged, in order that the next step may be taken more safely, to make choices and

## HUMAN MOTIVES

decisions. The choices and decisions of the organisms whose lives prepared the way, through æons of time, for ours, present themselves to us as instincts, and these instincts place forces in our hands which we are under constant temptation to abuse.

Corresponding to the two sorts of motives which I have designated constructive and adaptive, there are two modes of approach to the investigation of our motives. One of them is that with which every person is more or less familiar under the form of philosophical reasoning, especially as the philosophy of religion. In order to gain the best knowledge of human nature by this method, we ought, first of all, to consider man at his best, as he is when in the full flood of intelligent realization of his own possibilities and in the full flood of his power to make sacrifices, to form rational ideals, to see into and beyond actual situations to the meanings and the values that lie concealed in them. Hav-



## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

ing learned, through a contemplation and scrutiny such as this, to appreciate the nature of men at their best and to recognize the capacity in them to work for the most constructive social and ideal ends, we have the right to feel ourselves prepared to see the true nature of the processes that characterize those tendencies in the lives of men which prevent them from conforming systematically to their own ideals. At each point it is possible to trace the influence of these tendencies, assuming the guise of needful compromise and adaptation, though based on the instinctive desire to preserve motives and emotions which those who entertain them unawares would fain think themselves to have banished altogether.

The mature man is a more natural object of primary study than the immature man or the child, because the traits that make him mature correspond to the traits with which we, as rational beings, enter

## HUMAN MOTIVES

on our task. To accustom ourselves to the study of immaturity and childhood before proceeding to the study of maturity and manhood is often to habituate ourselves to an undesirable limitation of our vision with reference to the scope of the enterprise on which we enter.

The second mode of approach is through what has been called the "psycho-analytic method," which is to all intents and purposes a form of the "genetic method." The genetic method is that best known to us as the Darwinian mode of studying organic and psychological evolution, and resembles that mode of research in the respect that both of them begin with the *apparently* simpler manifestations of life and proceed from these toward the *apparently* more complex forms.

I do not rank the philosophic and the genetic modes of approach as equally significant in all respects for the study of human life, but as indispensable, each of them to the

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

other. If one had to choose between them, it would be more important to secure the benefits that flow from the study of men at their best and in their strength, than as they appear when seen at their second best and in their immaturity and weakness. But, for my part, I feel grateful for having had the opportunity of appreciating the benefit of each one of these sources of knowledge of mankind, because I feel sure that neither, alone, can give us what we need. And I shall endeavor to point out that failure to acquire the kind of knowledge which comes through the use of the psycho-analytic method, and especially the attitude of resistance which makes men unwilling to seek this knowledge and leads them to misunderstand its bearings, are serious handicaps to their progress in the ordinary affairs of life and to their power to understand and sympathize with their fellow men. For in order to know human nature at its best

## HUMAN MOTIVES

and to feel our sympathies going out, not to a few selected persons, but to men in general, we must learn to know men at their weakest as well as at their strongest points, and to see that the difference between success and failure is a difference of degree. Not only this, but the respects in which men are disguised from themselves, through repression, act as so many "blind spots,"<sup>1</sup> by virtue of which they become unable to see certain qualities in their neighbors. It is for this reason that many otherwise fine persons are so narrow in their appreciation of their fellow men.

These two modes of approach, while apparently so different, have some striking points of resemblance, both in method and in aim.

The psycho-analytic mode of approach deals with men primarily on the basis of their concrete experiences since birth, the

<sup>1</sup> I refer to the so-called "blind spot" of the retina, the presence of which is not recognized until some device is used for making it apparent.

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

record of which their memories are urged and aided to complete, and usually do complete to an extent not previously contemplated as possible. It is the concrete individual that is studied; but through the accumulated knowledge of many individuals we learn to comprehend many slight hints which each one's memory can furnish. The philosophic or rational mode of approach, on the other hand, is based on the observation that no logically-minded person (and that means, in effect, no person) finds it possible to think any particular thought without realizing, on reflection, that this implies entertaining other thoughts without which the first would be incomplete.

He must, for example, recognize, as a basis for every thought worth naming, the fact that he is himself a living, self-consistent person; and also that other persons exist with whom he can communicate and to whom he is bound by certain



## HUMAN MOTIVES

ties. A person may become so accustomed to neglecting these presuppositions and necessary inferences of his thought that he would acknowledge no recognition of them at all. But if he is led to look at himself intelligently, and encouraged to break down the resistances which he may be inclined to oppose, the evidence for the validity of certain inferences becomes so strong that it can scarcely be disregarded. By virtue of this reasoning, he finds himself forced to recognize layer upon layer of thought that make him look at the object of his primary inquiry in a wider and wider form. He finds, first, that all things are related; and, later, that this relationship should not be defined in any way that would make it inconsistent with the action of his own mind. From the fixed relationships between things of the sort contemplated by science, he moves on to the conception of "self-relation"—that is, to a relation characterized by a

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

self-consistency existing in spite of change, such as every one finds in his own observation of himself.

Somewhat the same statement may be made of the concrete discoveries concerning experience which are brought out by the psycho-analytic mode of approach. There, too, persons unused to the employment of this method at first declare that the memory of their experiences is limited by bounds which they find it impossible to overstep. But here, again, it is found that the difficulty is by no means one of memory alone. The main trouble is that each of us is hemmed in by habits and prejudices which have grown to be so firmly organized that it is hard to overcome them. One might call them unseen walls, or better designate them as an invisible net woven of cords as strong as steel. These walls, this net, must be rendered visible and must be broken through before further progress is possible.

Thus, while the two modes of approach



## HUMAN MOTIVES

differ strikingly in appearance (the first of them being based on the recovery of concrete memories, one by one, through processes of association and by the aid of hints derived from the analysis of dreams, the other depending on the conscious recognition, one after another, of a series of logical inferences and deductions), yet in fact the resemblances between them are equally striking and equally important. In using either mode, real, emotional resistances, of the nature of fixed prejudices, have to be broken down; and further analysis would show that in both cases these resistances are analogous in origin and nature. At any rate the task of overcoming them is so difficult that one is reminded, in dealing with them, of the story of the god Thor, to whom the task was assigned of emptying an innocent-seeming horn of wine, on the contents of which, after taking deep draughts, he was chagrined to find that he had made but slight impression. Later, it

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

was mockingly explained to him that the horn was magically connected with the sea. Another more homely but equally good illustration of the same point is that told by Emerson with regard to the weeding of a garden. The would-be gardener thinks, at first, that he has an easy task before him, but each weed pulled up reveals many more that lie behind. So it is with people's resistance to the recognition of their own memories or the logical inferences from their thoughts. We think our knowledge of ourselves is reasonably accurate and are sure that if the opportunity were offered we should be willing and glad to enlarge its boundaries. But when the opportunity really does offer, — that is, the moment we find ourselves beginning to see our own characters and temperaments, or even our present body of knowledge, in a new light, especially if in this process we come up against something which demands the breaking down of a

## HUMAN MOTIVES

prejudice, — at that moment we look about instinctively to find reasons for calling off the dogs, lest they really find the quarry. If we could be absolutely sure what the nature of the quarry was, perhaps the search for it would be continued. But to know this would be to have a knowledge which would make the search itself unnecessary. We must, then, go on, slowly, perhaps painfully, step by step; or else we must aid ourselves by constructing, with the help of imagination, a notion of the goal.

Some new meaning or motive always lies behind the meanings and motives which the person under investigation thrusts forward as those by which his thoughts and conduct are inspired. Any one familiar with the Socratic method of inquiry, as illustrated, for example, in the “Republic” of Plato, will appreciate the significance of this statement. The inquiries conducted by the great analyzer proceeded on both these lines, and the person under interro-

## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

gation was made to bring out motive after motive, inference behind inference, until he arrived at the real basis of his thought.

Not only is this true, but it is true also that between the concrete experiences and the logical inferences themselves, if one looks closely at the matter, the difference is not so great as at first sight appears. It is always possible to substitute the creative energy of a thing or a situation for the concrete thing itself. This cannot be denied. We must deal with concrete situations. We must deal also with their causes. If facts are stubborn things, the creative energies that lie behind them are still more stubborn. If electricity makes the lamp glow, and if it is the light thus given that we wish to understand, then it is the light that we must study. But no student should be blinded by this fact to the still greater fact of the unseen current that flows silently through the dark and hidden wire. In the light of

## HUMAN MOTIVES

the underlying tendency, even dull and obscure facts gain a new richness and meaning. The student of psycho-analysis who has studied carefully the "association" method, especially with reference to the analysis of dreams, must have become aware that when we seem to study experiences and actual memories, it is really the tendencies, the traits (especially of childhood) which lie behind these memories and behind the grotesquenesses and picturesque façades of dreams that are the real objects of our search. These traits contain, as elements, emotional longings which the censorship of social conscience forbids us openly to entertain.

In spite of the determined search for the concrete, even the most scientific and empirical of observers finds it unavoidable, from time to time, to speak of the energy which feeds our lives and makes possible our instinctive as well as our purposive acts and motives, as a "reservoir" of



## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

force, a "stream," a "current," and so on. To do this, however, is to recognize that an act is what it is because it is the expression of a creative energy, and my contention is that this element of creative energy is the real object to which our attention should mainly be devoted. Unless we learn to appreciate this causal energy and to find its analogue in ourselves, the contemplation of the act is vain.

To use one more simile, suggested by a friend, we may lie on the grass and watch with infinite enjoyment a soft cloud resting quietly upon the mountain top, the type and emblem of repose. But if we climb the mountain and visit the cloud itself, we may find that a strong wind is rushing through it, constantly bringing moisture which is quickly deposited and again as quickly taken up. To discover this aspect of the cloud's life is to learn a lesson that might aid one to appreciate the fact that human beings and human motives,

## HUMAN MOTIVES

significant though they may be regarded in and for themselves, are far more significant when regarded as the expression of something greater than themselves. These are considerations to which the genetic method, devoted as it is to the study of the panoramic details of our unfolding lives and debarred from the study of deeper-lying causes, cannot possibly do justice. But, in fact, the genetic method leads straight and of necessity to the philosophic method.

I have undertaken in this chapter to show that our motives are derived from two main sources. In everything that we do we obey, on the one hand, an impulse stronger than most people are aware of, which, if taken by itself, would make us entertain motives and perform acts corresponding to our best possible ideals and implying the activity of a power greater than ourselves. Obedience to this power does not deprive us of our independence,



## MAIN SOURCES OF MOTIVES

but helps us to act in conformity with the scheme of the universe taken as a whole.

But this tendency never works alone. The fact that we have an evolutionary history, and stand as the representative of a creative energy that expressed itself, first in far simpler forms of life and finally in the form of human instincts, and the additional fact that we are designed to live in social groups, brings it about that we have strong personal desires, which form an obvious source of motives making themselves felt throughout our lives and often coming into conflict with the motives of the other order.

After describing these two sources of motives I called attention to two modes of approach to the study of human life as exemplified in intentions and in acts.

Finally I pointed out that these two modes of approach — which were designated as philosophical and religious, on the one hand, and genetic or psycho-analytic, on the other — although they seem to

## HUMAN MOTIVES

differ widely, really resemble each other at many points; and that this resemblance is seen to be greater when instead of giving our attention only to concrete experiences, or to forces treated as concrete elements, as the student of natural science necessarily treats them, we substitute for them, in our thought, the creative energy of which they are the expression.

## CHAPTER II

### *The Rational Basis of Religion*

“The rounded world is fair to see,  
Nine times folded in mystery :  
Though baffled seers cannot impart  
The secret of its laboring heart,  
Throb thine with Nature’s throbbing breast  
And all is clear from east to west.  
Spirit that lurks each form within  
Beckons to spirit of its kin ;  
Self-kindled every atom glows,  
And hints the future which it owes.”

**I**N the previous chapter I have shown reason for adducing a religious standard of motives as the one to be relied upon for furnishing the main goal of progress, and I now wish to offer further reasons, of a more philosophical sort, for doing this.

It is neither in a doctrinal nor an unduly mystical sense that I undertake the advocacy of religion, but because I wish to ac-

## HUMAN MOTIVES

knowledge the supremacy of this influence in our lives. I am well aware that the church, with all that it implies, is a place where reason and rational emotion find themselves side by side with passion and superstition. If, however, — or in so far as, — religion is the expression of the truth, it expresses the most important aspect of the truth; and to support it strenuously in its best form is an essential preliminary to the elimination of its abuses.

To some people the religious feeling comes without effort and gives a joy and sense of dignity to daily life. But there are others who can only believe what they can classify in accordance with the kind of evidence that they are in the habit of employing, and who therefore set aside the claims of religion altogether, as founded on sentiment alone. Even at the best, they feel, the religious standard could be of no especial value except as fostering good conduct and loyalty of purpose.

## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

And since, by virtue of their intelligence, they have tacitly accepted these standards of conduct as binding, they see nothing to be gained through the assertion of relations of obligation toward an invisible and illimitable being, and through the observance of ceremonials which they cannot justify without compromising their honesty and their reason. The religious attitude, they think, is only the expression of a sentiment founded in a longing for excitement and compensation, and the claim for an "absolute" anything at all is philosophically untenable and practically unnecessary. This attitude is well defined, in part, in the following sentiment expressed a few years ago by an eminent English writer on philosophy :

"We do not need to know what is absolutely good in order to know that one thing is better than another. We do not need to know the elixir of life in order to know that beef is more nourishing than straw, and water healthier than absinthe. We do not

## HUMAN MOTIVES

need to be assured of immortality in order to judge that a life is worth living. We do not need to know absolute truth in order to detect a lie. The fact is that our ideals are not actually prior to the particular experiences they profess to 'explain,' but are built up out of suggestions derived from the latter."

If these various propositions were rationally tenable, and if when conscientiously adhered to they could be made to furnish a satisfactory basis of social morals, they ought to be accepted. But if they do not seem of this character, we ought to come forward with our objections, were it only for the sake of the many persons who are still in doubt and to whom our particular line of reasoning might appeal. It is certain that moral crises often come when both decision and conduct need the best prop and spur that can be given them, and the sense of obligation that goes with adherence to a big cause is surely greater than that which a little cause can set in



## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

action. In this sense, if in no other, we do need to know what is "absolutely good" in order to know that one thing is better than another. Unless we prepare ourselves for the coming of such crises, we are sure to find ourselves, like the foolish virgins, with our lamps unfilled and with our minds unfurnished with the knowledge of what source to turn to for the needful oil.

It is asserted that men find in the gratification of personal desires and in the defense of their own firesides motives of greater strength than any feeling of obligation toward an invisible ideal can supply. But this is a mistake. The social whole and its representative spirit are the real centre of every man's devotion.

My own reasons for giving my allegiance to the religious standard and for endorsing the observance of suitable religious ceremonials are as follows :

It is true that ceremonials can serve the ends of superstition, and this should be



## HUMAN MOTIVES

made known. But even superstition may carry the germs of something better. We keep birthdays and make much of the anniversaries of the birth or death of great men without feeling that our own sense of dignity suffers impairment thereby. Furthermore, the recognition of such feelings of affection and respect shows that we acknowledge something within us that is a little better than what we are able under ordinary conditions to put immediately into practice.

The situation as regards religion seems to me to be of the same sort with this. We all strive to show reason, love, and will in the conduct of our affairs and in our dealings with one another. We realize, also, that neither reason, love, nor will can exist or be used alone, and that it is only for the convenience of our speech that we reason as if this possibility existed. The nearer we come to the point of acting or thinking in such a way that our intelli-

## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

gence, our disinterested love, and our volition coalesce and are seen to reinforce one another, the more truly do we conceive ourselves to be acting in accordance with what we call our best. And we feel justified in asserting that the acts done under these conditions are constructive in a deeper and wider sense than those done under conditions when reason, love, or will seem to act independently. After passing on, in this way, along a well-defined line of progress, from less perfected to more perfected persons, have we the right to call a halt to our aspiring reason; and at what point? Must we not perforce conclude that a being exists of whom it is true that this interpenetration of reason, love, and will is absolute and invariable, and if we find reason to believe that we stand in a close relationship to this being, then have we not the duty and the right to show our recognition of the relationship by appropriate ceremonies? These ceremonies

## HUMAN MOTIVES

must not, however, be allowed to become the masters of our thoughts and feelings; nor should we fail to determine, through scrutiny, just what these thoughts and feelings are.

If the universe has a personality of which we can assert, at least, that it cannot be incompatible with our own and that it lends dignity to our own, and if we believe this personality to be under an inherent obligation to make itself prevail at its best, just as each finite person is glad to give the best expression to his personality, then we should recognize the same sort of obligation to work in harmony with the universe-personality that we feel with reference to the endorsement of our own sense of loyalty, rationality, and constructiveness.

In asking whether the universe is personal we ought to begin by admitting that one portion of it surely is, — namely, ourselves. We cannot use our reason to affirm our doubts and at the same time

## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

deny our reason. We cannot assert our own power of disinterested love and will and at the same time deny that love and will exist. Finally, since it is impossible that a thing which has a certain perfectness should have come into existence except as the expression, or through the influence, of a preëxisting something that was at least equally perfect, then the degree of perfection found by us in ourselves and attributed by us, as a necessity of our thought, to mankind at large, must have been forever in existence as a fundamental element, or condition, of the universal life of which our own is an integral part. The symphony cannot create the composer; its existence presupposes him.

I was much impressed recently to hear a distinguished and clear-thinking professor of philosophy, whose attitude with regard to "realism" had made me expect a different opinion on this point, assert that if God exists, it must be as an influence or

## HUMAN MOTIVES

energy permeating the universe as an essential feature of it and as present in every detail and part of it, and that in fact he believed this to be the case. This is my own opinion.

The fact is that if one is willing to see that any and every investigation must start with the acceptance, on the part of the man who makes it, of himself, at his best, as affirming a condition which the finished investigation must ratify and to which it must conform, much discussion would be spared.

Here we are, with our own duties and our own powers, and compelled to recognize the existence of other men, of like sort, at the cost of denying, if we refuse to do so, the very condition that we began by assuming as essential.

But the allegiance which we admit as due to ourselves as partially rational, partially disinterested beings, capable, in spite of our limitations, of conceiving of



## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

persons and a world not thus limited; this same allegiance we owe, in redoubled measure, to the Being whom we thus conceive, and whose existence, in conceiving of it, we affirm. In any investigation into the secrets of life, the inquirer is sure to find what he brings, — no less, no more. The whole man must give and find himself. While striving to find himself, he may, at first, look at the world naïvely, as a world of separate and individual things; then, in accordance with scientific teaching, as a world of fixed forces and relations. But here one cannot stop. Fixed relations have no standing in a world of real change, except as forms of speech, — that is, except as pointing to the self-relationships of personal life. Eventually one must assume these self-relationships of spontaneous personal life to be characteristic of the universe as a whole, even the world of nature conceived of as existing in relation to persons.

## HUMAN MOTIVES

I respect the agnostic attitude of scientific men and believe it to be the expression of a genuine honesty. But when it is too tenaciously adhered to, and the arguments that to me appeal so strongly fail to convince, I feel the right to think that this attitude is quite as much in need of explanation and defense as the attitude of the believer. Many persons find it extremely difficult to gain a practical sense of obligation,—as resting on them by virtue of an origin and destiny of the sort here assumed,—to recognize in their belief the basis of a real source of motives. This is largely because they consider it impossible to establish either their origin or their destiny, in an idealistic sense, or think that at best these cannot be defined except in terms of the most shadowy description. Yet such persons are often to be seen sacrificing themselves for a feeling of obligation which it would be impossible to defend in scientific terms. Many of them would be able to



## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

endorse in practice the fine lines that stand over the gateway to Soldiers' Field at Harvard University :

“Though love repine, and reason chafe,  
There came a voice without reply, —  
‘Tis man's perdition to be safe  
When for the truth he ought to die.’”

But to do this, to re-bind oneself in this fashion, is to accept and assert one of the essential conditions of religion.

If we go further and express the idea in a form at once more personal and more universal, we must take God, or His equivalent, as the object of our devotion. This should not be considered as amounting to the postulation of some cold and infinitely remote idea. We use these terms — “God” and “the universe” — to express something which we feel to be in us, yet which transcends us and the other persons to whom we might feel that our loyalty was due. To do this is equivalent to the

## HUMAN MOTIVES

assertion, in its final form, of the obligation which every man is under to maintain the dignity of mankind at its best.

A difficulty in the way of adopting this religious ideal as a standard of obligation is that the terms "universe" and "God," besides being shadowy, have connotations that to many people are positively obnoxious. They suggest sentimentality and emotional excess. It is for reasons such as this that men's attitude toward religion is at present in a peculiar state. One observer after another has declared, on the basis of positive evidence, that two tendencies of opposite sorts are now apparent, side by side. On the one hand men are leaving the established churches, while on the other the religious sentiment as such, accompanied with the desire for opportunities of union on some religious basis, is distinctly on the increase. Some established forms, however, we must have, just as the soul must have a body, and it

## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

would be possible to infuse new life into the old forms if all were agreed on the essential points at stake.

Finally, the sense-world, with which our passions, our efforts, our fears, and our experiences are all bound up, has such a hold upon the mind that to be asked to believe in any world from which time and space have been excluded arouses at first a sense of resistance hard to overcome and a feeling of distress difficult to endure. The memories which we owe to the sense of touch and the senses of sight and hearing have such a value for us that they almost constrain us to reject all other modes of getting at our facts. When we are asked, therefore, to accept an unpicturable world, it is inevitable that in making the attempt to do so we should crane our necks as if with the secret hope that we might after all make it visible, forgetting that in the world of dreams and fancies we divorce ourselves from our senses altogether, and

## HUMAN MOTIVES

yet see and feel and hear, and also that language is capable of making evident to us, mentally, relations which no sense can ratify.

To learn to make the unpicturable world real is to make our way toward a light which constantly grows brighter; and as we near its source we learn to reject, for good and all, the idea that to discuss matters of this sort is to study something that a man might almost pride himself on being ignorant of, or certainly might be content to remain ignorant of without acknowledging any serious gap in his education. Attitudes of this sort I now look upon as mainly reactions of defense.

What we most care for in the world are love, justice, honor, power, — all of which are unpicturable and are related to the various forms of energy without which nothing could exist. To gain a realizing sense that these forms of energy are just as real as any fact in nature is to make an

## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

advance well worth the working for. Such an advance cannot be gained without labor, for to feel the reality of a world of this sort, to learn to live in the midst of these unpicturable energies, requires practice just as truly as it requires practice to feel at home in any unfamiliar environment. Many have learned this lesson and have made their knowledge an influence of real significance in their lives; and among these I think especially of Helen Keller, who has described the progress of her own enlightenment in striking terms. Groping her way through her one channel, in her search for the fullness of the picturable world, she found, at last, and as if suddenly, that her mind, with its power of retaining its own self-consistency through its constantly and infinitely changing relationships, arrived at last at a point where her blindness and her deafness became almost banished. Toward the end of the chapter in which she describes her progress she says :



## HUMAN MOTIVES

“Ancient philosophy offers an argument which seems still valid. There is in the blind as in the seeing an Absolute which gives truth to what we know to be true, order to what is orderly, beauty to the beautiful, touchableness to what is tangible. If this is granted it follows that this Absolute is not imperfect, incomplete, partial. It must needs go beyond the limited evidence of our sensations, and also give light to what is invisible, music to the musical that silence dulls. Thus mind itself compels us to acknowledge that we are in a world of intellectual order, beauty, and harmony. . . . Thus deafness and blindness do not exist in the immaterial mind, which is philosophically the real world, but are banished with the material senses. Reality, of which visible things are the symbol, shines before my mind. While I walk about my chamber with unsteady steps, my spirit sweeps skyward on eagle wings and looks out with unquenchable vision upon the world of eternal beauty.”

Although we live and breathe and have our being in an unpicturable world, a world not of things but of values, the prejudice against studying the nature of



## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

this world still retains its force. It is often thought that no one could breathe, in any practical and practicable sense, the rare atmosphere of an unpicturable world, and that if Immanuel Kant said that time and space exist only in our minds, as a necessary condition for our thinking, he was talking a sort of nonsense which could be treated with neglect, if not contempt.

Persons not in the habit of defining to themselves the conditions of existence of the unpicturable world of ideal values are apt to make errors of two sorts. They first clothe this world in forms, details, and colors which are taken from the life of evolution and experience and represent the projection of experience, and then, finding themselves unable to accept a world so pictured, they reject the arguments for its existence altogether. In order that these pitfalls may be avoided, it should be seen that what is claimed is the possession of something, itself undefinable in detail,

## HUMAN MOTIVES

which underlies all forms and makes experience possible and intelligible. Even what we call the world of reality is to a great extent a vision, but the power to entertain such visions, unpicturable though they are, remains our best possession.

Every thinking person knows that if matter is a condition, to a certain extent, of the existence and manifestation of force, nevertheless matter, as ordinarily conceived, is nothing without force, and that in fact there is a strong tendency, even on the part of physicists, to move toward conceptions of matter such as indicate a growing suspicion on their part that force can at least be conceived of, for purposes of study, as detached from these other manifestations of themselves that are called matter. Wherever electricity and magnetism are found, for instance, one sees them always in a double form. Imponderable and unpicturable as they are, they are capable nevertheless of dividing themselves

## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

into positive and negative "fluids," — that is, of acting upon themselves, with nothing else between. And when it comes to the introspection of our own thought the same thing happens on a larger scale. It is not with our bodily eyes that we see our thoughts, and yet we do observe them.

In addition to the reasons already urged for hostility to metaphysical ideas, the common argument should be mentioned that mind cannot be fundamental in the world, because if we go back to the time when no organic life existed on our planet there is no evidence that mind existed either. By this argument, mind seems to be ruled out of the universe altogether. It is forgotten, however, that no one would admit for a moment that the absence of organic life, in the ordinary acceptation of the word, meant the banishment of the laws of physics.

But what are the laws of physics? Are they something that can have a real and

## HUMAN MOTIVES

permanent and spontaneous existence conjoined with the capacity for creating out of themselves the minds of living beings? Or are they formulas of measurement adopted by men for particular acts, with the accomplishment of particular results in view, just as they use foot-rules as a convenient but entirely arbitrary mode of measurement? No one can sit long, to-day, among a group of scientific men freely talking together, without hearing astounding admissions from them as to occurrences that seem to show, when the matter is looked into closely, that the physical laws are only approximations to the truth.

The fact is that when inquiring as to the relative validity of physical laws and mental laws, it is with ourselves that we are under obligation to begin and ourselves that we must take into account at every stage of the proceedings, as furnishing at once the powers that work and the tools

## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

through which they work. In short, physics can come to its rights only through metaphysics. The world of absolute, iron-chain relativity must be recognized as only a symbolic expression for a world of self-relativity — that is, a world of free thought, uniform in proportion to the degree of perfection to be found in the motives and the reason that work through it. “Das Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichniss.”

To shield ourselves behind an unwillingness to be thought of as giving allegiance to symbolic statements as if they were scientific definitions, is a sort of self-defense, indicative of a suspicion that some truth really lurks behind these statements in the form of a god to be loved, or a devil to be feared, — with neither of which can we bring ourselves face to face with anything like the ease with which we can face an experiment in chemistry or physics.

Professor Royce defines God as “the



## HUMAN MOTIVES

totality of the expressions and life of the world-will, when considered in its conscious unity." This definition will be better understood if it is translated into terms of our own experience. To speak of any being as "consciously unified" is to say that he is conscious of himself as remaining virtually the same person from one day to the next, although in reality we must admit that neither in a physical nor a mental sense is it possible for a person to remain the same even from one moment to the next. The sense of unity — that is, of self-consistency — through this change means something more than that to a considerable extent the two circles which we might regard as standing, the one for the individual of to-day, the other for the individual of yesterday or to-morrow, could be thought of as overlapping. It is even doubtful whether in any proper sense such an overlapping could be postulated at all. But the real point is that a self-consciously



## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

unified person is one who not only can but must express himself in constantly new forms and thus show himself to be a person of many sides or many possibilities. This kind of unity, or individuality, which is best defined in the expression that a person is never so much himself as when he is giving himself wholly to some cause outside himself, is a unity not definable in terms of physical laws, but characteristic of spontaneous life. To say that God is the totality of the expressions of the world-will is again to say nothing more than what can justly be affirmed of every man. No other definition of a personality is possible, for nothing lives except as it acts, and the acts that we have done and that contribute to make us what we are, still live. To say that God creates man and the world and is immanent in the acts and thoughts of men is also entirely explicable, if thought of from the light of our own experience. Do we not make our own thoughts and

## HUMAN MOTIVES

acts, and are we not immanent in them? Do we not also, at each moment, make our bodies, when we bend them to our wills and set up mechanisms which thereafter will do what was once the immediate expression of our bidding?

We cannot think either of ourselves or of the world as partly living (that is, partly animated by a spontaneous life) and partly dead, although we must be prepared to see constantly appearances that might be taken as giving rise to this idea, — just as, again, in the case of the rising and setting of the sun, we seem to see that luminary going up and down. The particles of our skin and its appendages seem, indeed, to dry up and disappear. But here comes the law of the conservation of energy to our aid. These particles take the same place that the leaves take that fall from the forest trees. Sooner or later they become converted into soil, and new leaves come again; that is, they never get far away

## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

from a state in which they are virtually portions of the spontaneous life and energy of the world. And so our own bodies are in close relation to our personal lives, and the laws of physics to the laws of the mind. Motion would soon cease and would never have begun unless beyond the bodies moved there had been some source of energy that was self-renewing. To this energy, in its simplest form, the name of “*purus actus*,” pure activity, or self-activity, is given; and it needs but little change in point of view to recognize the practical identity of this principle with the “*poussée vitale*” and “*élan vital*” of Bergson, with which every one is now familiar, with the “vital impulse” accepted as essential by some biologists, and with the energy assumed by psycho-analytic writers to be resident in our instincts.

Everything which is real is self-active, and nothing except that which is real in this sense exists for us at all, unless as an

## HUMAN MOTIVES

abstraction of the imagination. To this self-activity must be accorded the same power of acting on itself with which the study of electricity and magnetism has made us all familiar. But it should be clearly recognized that these two ways in which self-activity expresses itself, although near enough alike to permit the use of the more familiar as a guide to the understanding of the less familiar, are by no means identical. Self-activity, in its simplest manifestation — that is, as constituting the life of nature — is to be thought of as like a sequence of tones (discords, it may be) which if taken by themselves are of no value but which may be conceived of as infused with the meaning of the whole musical composition of which they are a part. Or, again, such simpler manifestations might be compared to the first outline drawn by a great master and intended to foreshadow his finished composition; or to the self-active proposition of the logician,

## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

which brings out through its spontaneous life hidden possibilities of meaning and of power.

So, first expressing itself through physical laws, then through such forms of activity as are characteristic in the sequences of the vegetable world and the animal world, a point is reached of which Emerson speaks when he says :

“And well the primal pioneer  
Knew the strong task to it assigned,  
Patient through Heaven’s enormous year  
To build in matter home for mind.”

More and more, as time goes on, it is seen that the evidences of apparent determinism in the world, numerous as they are, tend to disappear. The history of mankind and the history of the individual alike are histories, on the whole, of the growth of freedom. The stream is often interrupted, often seems to take a backward course ; but its main flow is onward ;



## HUMAN MOTIVES

“For He that worketh high and wise,  
Nor pauses in his plan,  
Will take the sun out of the skies  
Ere freedom out of man.”

The universe is a self-consistent whole, rational and free, ever and eternally changing in detail yet without losing its consistency with itself. By the same right, we continue from week to week and from year to year to call ourselves by the same name, to feel ourselves responsible for the acts that as other persons we once did and as other persons we shall do. Each fragment of the universe is living, and by the law in accordance with which life is self-division and creation and every element of that which creates passes into the created, every particle of the universe has a measure of freedom — that is, of choice. Of this power of choice, evidence is to be seen even in the lowest forms of organisms known to men. But freedom cannot exist without conflict and clash, and through



## THE RATIONAL BASIS OF RELIGION

these it must win a uniformity in which order is again found, — this time, however, not dependent upon an iron-chain necessity but existing as an evidence of perfect intelligence coalescing with perfectly disinterested love and perfect will.

The reasoning through which I have here sought to show our obligation to assert a universe of completeness transcending and supplementing our world of incompleteness, is of a kind on which we all constantly rely yet without realizing the extent to which we do so or the full bearing of the principle involved. Every one will admit, upon reflection, that we reach our conclusions partly through the unconscious recognition of inferences and contrasts that we do not name. One cannot affirm that a given object is light in color without tacitly assuming that it might have been dark, and so on. It is less obvious yet more important that one cannot say "I perceive" without tacitly assuming a self-conscious, self-consistent, relatively continuous "I." In some respects these tacit assumptions are the more vital portions of the process in question. Thus, the best service rendered by a *perception* is often that it points to a *conception*, and the best service rendered by a *conception* of a given sort is that it points to a further *conception* of a more comprehensive kind. Through observing physical phenomena and discovering how rigidly dependent they *seem to be*, one upon another, one is led to see that no such rigid law of relativity obtains among mental phenomena and learns thus to recognize that thought is self-related and that, in this sense, our mental life takes its place beside the processes characterized as "infinite." This principle, whereby the finite is used to prove the infinite, the logical to prove something beyond logic, derived activity to prove spontaneous activity, has been relied upon by great thinkers since the days of Plato, and in our day

## HUMAN MOTIVES

and generation especially by such men as Doctor W. T. Harris, Professor Royce, Professor Bowne, and others of like standing. Its importance has recently been pointed out afresh by Doctor C. J. Keyser, Professor of Mathematics in Columbia University, in his address entitled "Science and Religion, the Rational and the Superrational."

In this striking and inspiring paper Doctor Keyser points out that our human faculties enable us to follow sequences of any and every sort up to an indeterminate and ever-receding point. Beyond every point to which our finite intelligence leads us, we find ourselves obliged to infer the existence of something which transcends our power of logical definition. Through necessary inferences of this sort we are compelled to get beyond the picturable to the unpicturable world, beyond time and space to a real infinite, and beyond the mental operations of logical sort to a mental life transcending logic. The interesting address closes with the statement that "in every category where the laws of reason reign we find that the great process of Idealization points aloft to some form above the laws: we find that — like the Class of all Classes, like the Joint Affirmation of all Propositions, like the Logical Sum of all Relations, like Omniscience, like Beauty absolute — so, too, Eternality, Omnipotence, Omnipresence, Necessity or Fate, Unconditioned Freedom or Self-determination, Perfect Justice, Universal Harmony, the Goodness of God, Felicity Divine, and many other supreme ideals and supreme perfections of rational experience and thought, are all of them forms of Being absolute, constituting an Overworld, a realm Superrational.

\* \* \* \* \*

"To debate the 'existence' of such a world were a vain dispute. In some sense, whatsoever quickens, lures, and sustains, exists. Aspiration is not mocked. Reason's unattainable ideals are the light-giving Æther of Life. Therein is the precious and abiding reality of the Overworld."

## CHAPTER III

### *The Psycho-Analytic Movement*

“Of the storm of men’s passions, the clash of  
their deeds

I am the soul and the breath,

The weaver of life’s web :

Birth and death,

Flood and ebb ;

The pattern grows ;

Life flows and glows ;

So at Time’s roaring loom do my shuttles weave  
Men’s lives as a garb for the God of Love.”

The Earth Spirit, “Faust,” Part I.

THIS chapter is intended to give a more systematic account than has thus far been attempted of the psycho-analytic movement, its aims, its accomplishments, and the significance for the study of human motives of the repressed tendencies with which it deals.

The *psycho-analytic movement* may be defined as an attempt to make the facts

## HUMAN MOTIVES

and principles discovered through the analysis of individual lives of service in the study of race history and of life in general. The *psycho-analytic method* is the name given to the special means by which the memory is aided to penetrate into the forgotten portions of one's life, with the view of bringing to the light of clear consciousness the details of emotional conflicts which, in spite of being out of sight, exert an influence, often of an unfavorable sort, on the development of character and temperament, as well as on the motives, the habits, and the thoughts. The memory accomplishes this by passing from one to another of a long series of events related to each other by ties of the most varied sorts, and in doing so, it makes use of the aid furnished by inferential thinking and utilizes the hints provided by vast treasures of accumulated knowledge. The aim is a practical one, and the question is how the person under investigation can best be

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

helped to gain a deeper and more intelligent insight into his own life. Every thought, every emotion even, is partly rational, partly an expression of feeling, and partly a manifestation of will. If the element of reason is accentuated, the element of emotion must play a part more in harmony with reason. This is education and leads to a gain in mental stability and health. The data that are needed must be sought for at first by burrowing in the dark closet of one's mental life, somewhat as one digs for Indian relics in an old shell heap; that is, by giving rein to one's memory and one's power of thought, and encouraging it to go on a voyage of discovery without reference to what may be discovered. When found, these "relics" prove to be anything but inert facts. On the contrary, they are very active agents, insistent on their rights and difficult to subdue.

The starting points for such processes



## HUMAN MOTIVES

of search into the unconscious life, through association, are contributed by ideas that come into the patient's mind as if accidentally or that are furnished by dreams, which, unimportant though they may seem to be, are really found, *when analyzed*,<sup>1</sup> to be based largely on fundamental experiences of early childhood. In similar fashion, conversations, word-association tests, indeed almost any material that the patient's random, non-selective thoughts may offer, can serve as points of departure for these analyses.

Having defined thus briefly what psychoanalysis aims primarily to do, I beg leave, before proceeding further, to indicate the position of this important movement when considered in relation to the other principal mode of approach to the study of human life and motives which has been mentioned in the preceding chapters.

<sup>1</sup> It is not the dream story, as one first tells it, that has this significance, but the deeper-lying memory complexes drawn out by association.



## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

Professor Sigmund Freud, who has been the real life and soul of this movement from the beginning, has stated and reiterated in clear terms that no generalizations should be drawn from the data which the method furnishes that are not fully justified by the clinical observations. He has always asserted that he makes no claim to have discovered anything like the sole avenue to the explanation of human life and human conduct. He and his immediate followers have felt themselves to be dealing merely with a well-defined scientific investigation,—the study, namely, of a certain portion of the unconscious life, that portion which is made up of emotions which are unwelcome (for social reasons) and therefore repressed, yet which are longed for as sources of enjoyment. They have carefully avoided, so far as this was practicable, the postulation of any definite theological or philosophical opinions. Psycho-analysts might reach what conclusions

## HUMAN MOTIVES

they wished on such points as these, or any points, though with the understanding that if they found themselves impelled to use methods or assert principles that were essentially incompatible with those on which Freud had based his definition of psycho-analysis, they should no longer designate their methods by that term. I do not consider that this applies to the attitude I take, because I accept Freud's definition and merely assert that psycho-analytic doctrines, like all scientific doctrines, are valid only within certain definite limits.

It is truly remarkable what a touchstone has been put into our hands through this significant movement, wherewith to distinguish real motives from the apparent motives which overlies them, and, underneath the faults and failings, the fears and obsessive habits of adult life, to trace the workings of the instinctive cravings of imaginative, pleasure-seeking, and pain-shunning infancy, dragging back the adult

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

from the fulfilment of his higher destiny. The complete enumeration of the gains that have already been secured, of the paths of promise that have been opened to us, through these fruitful investigations and these applications of the biogenetic principle in the study of human personality, would be a recital of an imposing character. It is not only for medicine that these advances have been won. It has been clearly shown that the great pieces of imaginative and creative literature of the world, especially the great world poems such as the tragedies and epics of Greece, the fairy stories and the myths which have stood so long the test of time, and so, too, the manifestations of wit and humor and the many other modes of naïve expression in which the soul of man instinctively lays open its hidden motives, are all permeated by the same tendency that underlies the signs and symptoms of the hysterias, the phobias, and the compulsions.

## HUMAN MOTIVES

The first impulse to these investigations came from Doctor J. Breuer of Vienna, who had occasion, in 1881, to treat an intelligent young woman suffering from hysteria in a serious form, characterized by paralyses and contractions and disorders of speech, for which he tried in vain the usual means of cure. With him was associated, as student and assistant, Sigmund Freud. Doctor Breuer found that the facts offered by this patient in explanation of her illness, although they were freely furnished and represented her entire history so far as her consciousness could give it, constituted only a fraction of the story which in the end her memory succeeded in drawing from its depths. Under the influence of a special method of inquiry, the history was gradually recovered of many experiences which had apparently been forgotten and which proved to be of an emotional character, connected with personal longings that had not been gratified. In pro-

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

portion as the barriers were thrown down that separated the hidden portion of the patient's past from that of which she had remained consciously aware, one and another of her distressing symptoms dropped away.

No further investigations were undertaken for a number of years; but the facts observed had made a deep impression upon Freud, and he meditated upon them during a period of ten years, a part of which time he spent as a student of Charcot in Paris. On his return to Vienna, he urged Breuer to take up the matter again, and to utilize the striking results obtained in this case as a basis for investigations upon a larger scale. After this, for a time, the two worked together, later Freud alone. In a recent review of these experiences and of the subsequent history of the psycho-analytic movement, Freud points out that Breuer, who was a much older man and a student of general medi-



## HUMAN MOTIVES

cine, withdrew from the enterprise (as the former believes) at a point when he became half consciously aware whither it was driving — or rather, that it was driving in a direction in which he did not care to go further.

Freud was then, and has remained, a man of keen insight, and of remarkable honesty and fearlessness. Special reasons of a personal character had led him to interest himself in the treatment of nervous disorders, and the study of medicine was the natural avenue to that field. Having once made his choice, he found himself captured and engrossed by the interest of this new movement, which had impressed him from the outset as one of great importance. He felt himself a pioneer in a new country, and under conscientious obligation to report, without hesitation, everything that he found there exactly as he found it. In no other way can any pioneer explorer fulfil his obligations toward mankind, whose unchosen representative he is.



## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

One of the first facts that forced itself gradually more and more upon his notice was that the childhood of patients with nervous symptoms is, in an unexpected degree and sense, the parent of their later years; and also that the symptoms which many of them present later form a sort of hieroglyphic language in which their earlier history is preserved. He learned to see that the accounts which his patients gave to explain the onset of their illnesses had by no means the significance which they purported to have. Most of these nervous disorders come on either in puberty, — that is, at the beginning of one of the great critical periods of life, — or at a time when the person concerned is subjected to some one or another of the inevitable strains of personal, domestic, or social responsibility. This is no more true, however, of nervous invalids than it is of persons living the ordinary life of citizens in the community. The long shadows of coming responsibility,

## HUMAN MOTIVES

which begin to make their appearance during adolescence, the necessity, virtual if not actual, of thinking of oneself as a husband, a wife, a parent, the acute or prolonged strains of increasing cares, growing anxiety, coupled with the obligation to bear one's burdens to a great extent alone, — all these difficulties, present or to come, combine to accentuate any specific tendencies to weakness, of whatever sort. But over and above these causes, and as furnishing a virtual preparation for them, there are to be found, by careful searching, a series of predispositions, due partly to the accentuation, in infancy and childhood, of particular traits and tendencies of temperament and character, or to the establishment of partial arrests of development at certain points along the line of rapidly changing infancy and childhood. Thus are laid down what might be called special lines of least resistance.

From the individual himself all the

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

details of this early history are hidden. What he feels and what he tries to ward off is a sense of distress which he often recognizes as a sense of estrangement from himself.<sup>1</sup> What he does not recognize is that in consequence of these temporary inhibitions to further progress that became established in infancy and early childhood, he became subject to special forms of temptation which were thereafter to be reckoned with. When prevented from pushing forward toward the best outcome, the stream of energy of which the individual is the expression occupies channels which would otherwise have been left unflooded. In like fashion the child who cannot enter into the life of his school companions finds some means of occupying his wits and hands, and thus opens doors for himself into modes of gratification and

<sup>1</sup> The sense of being in the grasp of some agency foreign to oneself, which accompanies this sense of estrangement, is the equivalent of the demonic "possession" of the ancients.

## HUMAN MOTIVES

excitement to which he will remain only too liable to return.

In his attempt to secure for himself some measure of relief from these feelings of distress, the individual, now grown older, feels forced to explain them in some manner which is consonant with his previous training and his theory of life, however crude this theory may be. No person can live happily in a world that seems out of relation to his thought; and every man who feels himself surrounded by influences that he cannot understand must perforce attempt to seek some sort of rational explanation, which may have reference only to a particular situation, or may involve, though perhaps without his knowledge, the framing of some unifying theory of the universe, — which under the circumstances is likely to be imperfect. It is as a part of the attempt to secure such an explanation that the patient lays stress on this or that fatigue, this or that partic-

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

ular illness or disease as the assumed cause of his distress, or concludes that the universe is cruel or irrational or the community hostile to his peace.

It is needless to say that I have no intention of minimizing the effect of the later occurrences and strains in which nervous illnesses (so potent, indirectly, as a source of motives) seem to start. I wish only to insist upon the fact that all the peculiarities of a man's character and temperament, whether we call them normal or abnormal, desirable or undesirable, are partly due to the establishment in the earliest years of life of those lines of least resistance which in their turn imply temporary arrests of development at one or another special point. We are all familiar with the sayings, "The child is father of the man" and "Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined." But what this means in terms of the exact bending of the twig, the exact characteristic of this or that



## HUMAN MOTIVES

especial phase of childhood, it is now more possible to state. The later events of life, in other words, owe a large portion of their power for harm to the fact that they reproduce, in new shape, old emotional excesses and limitations, of childish form and childish substance. Children love fairy stories and love to invent them for themselves; and they often go on, — still as children, more mature in years but still immature in fact, — telling themselves fairy stories to the end of time.

Perhaps through the accompanying set of figures it will be possible to gain a better grasp of this idea. Let us suppose that *D* represents (by its wholly arbitrarily chosen shape) one or another of these later experiences which is the apparent cause of some undesirable peculiarity of character. Such assumed causes are illness of some sort, losing one's possessions, the death of a relative or friend, and so on.

Let me say again that I do not deny that



## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

events like these, whose number is infinite, may in this or that particular case exert a considerable share of the influence that has been ascribed to them. All that I would affirm is that in everybody's history the effect of these later occurrences is immensely accentuated if earlier experiences of an emotional sort have occurred in infancy and early childhood, strong enough to give a "set" to the patient's traits, and with a sufficiently accurate resemblance to the later experiences to have enabled the patient's instinct to utilize the latter as means of vaguely recalling the former.

In the case suggested by the diagram, the figures *A*, *B*, *C*, and *D*, although by no means alike, resemble one another in several respects. "Birds of a feather flock together" in the mental as in the physical world; and if the experience *A*, which we assume to have been one occurring during the plastic period of infancy, trivial though

## HUMAN MOTIVES

it would perhaps have seemed in the eyes of the adult, was able to make a powerful

The Adult



The Child  
or Infant

emotional impression at that time, it will seek to reproduce itself later through *B* and *C* and *D*, and through a thousand more such *B*'s and *C*'s and *D*'s. This tendency will also be a much stronger one if the emotional experience *A* was wholly, or in part, repressed at the time of its occurrence, or soon after. For these repressed experiences have a marvellous ability to resist the influence of time. The only part of all this process of which the patient retains conscious awareness may be a sense of nameless distress,

corresponding to the conflict between two sets of desires which he had felt. It is this nameless distress that forces him to adopt

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

some seemingly rational explanation, — the illness, etc., — which, however, in view of the repression that has occurred, cannot be the real explanation. The distress, even, may be absent. The thoroughly egoistic patient, for example, often feels his egoistic *cul de sac* to be a paradise. And yet it is the fool's paradise *par excellence* in the eyes of most onlookers.

One point of essential interest in the developments to which the study of the famous first case of Breuer and Freud — and of the tens and hundreds of others which came after it — soon gave rise was that emotions of a very personal nature, implying personal tensions of an emotional character, came more and more definitely to the front, and that when these were scrutinized, they were found to pass without a break into that great storehouse of intense feeling that one designates as “sexual.” As the result of studying these developments, Freud found himself obliged

## HUMAN MOTIVES

to conclude that only those persons suffer from these nervous disorders whose sex-emotions (the word being taken in a sense presently to be defined) are in some way disturbed. This statement was at first one of concomitance rather than of cause. But the causal significance of it became, as time went on, forced more and more into the foreground of discussion. When one who is furnished with the information that is now available looks back upon the formative period of these doctrines and lays aside prejudice of all sorts, it seems extraordinary that the generalization given should have aroused the storm of comment that it did. For the persons whom Freud studied were, speaking broadly, persons in whom the evidences of the emotional life are always prominent; that is, first of all, his patients, then the great class of artists of every form and sort, painters, sculptors, poets, musicians, writers of fiction, and representatives of religion and

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

philosophy, of certain types — persons, in a word, who have strong emotions which they cannot express directly and so must express indirectly, — as by symbols. Stating this in another way, Freud and the psycho-analysts have but followed the lead of the innumerable writers of romance, song, and drama, seeking only to carry further and to express in scientific terms what these others had given utterance to in other fashions.

Freud has never asserted it as his opinion, and it certainly is not mine, that this is the only root from which artistic expression springs. On the other hand it is probable that all artistic productions are partly referable to this source, and a close examination of many of them would enable any one to justify the opinion that it is a source which is largely drawn upon. To feel that in saying this I bring an unjust accusation against artists and those whose expression partakes of the artistic would



## HUMAN MOTIVES

be to seriously misunderstand my meaning and the facts at issue. We need not, indeed, confine ourselves to writers of romance. Every student of folk-lore and the histories of primitive races, every student of evolution, such as Darwin, is aware that reproduction forms an essential part of the duty of every living thing, and that the preparations for it are multi-fold and vast to a degree infinitely transcending — one might think — the actual necessities of the case. It is so imperative that plants and animals should provide for the perpetuation of their species that they adopt inconceivably subtle and varied methods to bring this result about and to make sure that it shall succeed. It is in this light that the whole matter should be studied, and no thinking person can remain in ignorance of the fact that a large proportion of the conventions of men's social lives have, among other things, this end in view. Around this great function of



## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

reproduction — a function so inherent that even to live or to think is to create or reproduce — emotions center that are stronger, more varied, and at the same time more repressed than are any other set of motives whatsoever. How, then, could it be otherwise than that in any great system of emotional reactions (for as such it is certain that “symptoms” should be classified) these emotions should be prominent?

The question need not here be raised whether from every point of view it is desirable or necessary to classify as sexual a large number of phenomena that Freud did so classify. For it should be known that he came, after a time, to extend this designation to every personal relation, of whatever sort, in which the “tender emotions” are conspicuously active. In brief, he made it synonymous with the German word “*lieben*,” which may be looked upon as practically equivalent to our English “love.”

## HUMAN MOTIVES

One can readily see, at the same time, how it happened that people shrank so strongly and so bitterly from accepting Freud's aphoristic proposition and declined utterly to treat his statements with the respect they would have shown to any other scientific generalization standing on a similar foundation of observation. How numerous and important are the conclusions that have been reached on data gathered with less conscientiousness and pains and less convincing than those which he brought forward! Indeed, one of the most interesting and important pieces of evidence in the case is the very fact of this hostility; and Freud tells us that he himself at first shared in the repugnance, and that he might never have reached the conclusions he did reach had he not remembered certain strong opinions casually dropped by several of his teachers, which he was at first inclined to disbelieve but which retained a hold upon his memory.

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

The fact of the presence of this resistance in people's minds is, I repeat, one of the strongest reasons for believing that we have here to deal with a set of feelings that are, in the first place, intensely strong, in the next place vigorously repressed, and, in the third place, preserved through this very repression as furnishing a real and desirable richness of meaning to all the acts of daily life in which personal relationships are concerned, and also as furnishing a treasure-house of excitement on which we can instinctively draw, even to an undesirable extent, without making it appear, even to ourselves, that this is being done.

The poet who stirs our emotions with his recitals of deeds or thoughts to which the term "excess" might justifiably be applied has no realization that this excess on which he counts has its root in the repressions of his sex emotions. It is not necessary that he should become aware of this fact, unless as a student in this field. But

## HUMAN MOTIVES

on the other hand, it is important that those persons in society, be they intelligent laymen, disinterested mothers, or educators, who desire to form their opinions on the basis of a real knowledge of human nature, should know all that they can of the principles here at stake.

We often hear it said that Freud and his followers have "gone too far" in classifications of this sort and in the references that they make to symbolizations of innumerable sorts. But it is forgotten, or not realized, that the use of these symbolizations dates back for the most part to periods so remote that their historical origin is shrouded in deep mystery, and, on the other hand, that the importance of the classification is not apparent until the time comes when it must be used to serve some really practical end. I repeat, however, that the striking fact is the attitude of hostility to the suggestion of the validity of a classification such as this, an attitude

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

which can have no other root than the fact that the ideas which it brings up are accompanied by emotional tensions so great and at the same time so significant and in a sense so sacred, that we are unwilling to have them played upon, or even clearly to recognize them ourselves.

When we rise to a mental level next above the feelings of this class, we find ourselves face to face with a sentiment which the Church from time to time has done so much to foster: that everything that has to do with the sexual emotions is gross and wrong. This idea is in part, no doubt, of Oriental origin, since in the East repression has been carried so far as to involve even life itself, — as exemplified, for instance, by the conduct of the monks in Thibet, who have themselves enclosed, while still comparatively young, in caves connecting with the outer world only by small openings through which insufficient quantities of food are pushed.



## HUMAN MOTIVES

On the other hand, it has been an accompaniment of the growth of the desire for a fuller life of the spirit, and an immortality through which the pains and sorrows of this world should be shaken off or left behind. Some persons consider the body as a cage, a prison-house, and the home of dust and decay in which we are compelled to live but from which we should long and aspire to escape. Needless to say, there are still many religious sects the world over among whom feelings of this sort are carried to an unwarrantable point.

But the fact that has been overlooked in all these tendencies is that when we are dealing with human nature we are dealing with a power to which we may, for the moment, blind ourselves, and that can be modified but cannot be obliterated.

It is in seeking and finding ever-new outlets for these repressed emotions that adaptation, often in injurious forms, takes place.



## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

I have called attention to the fact that it is in the periods of infancy and early childhood that the lines of least resistance are laid down, traits and tendencies formed, and compromises adopted which the adult needs only to follow later in order to find himself launched on a path of trouble, the source of which is hidden even from himself. All that I can say on this point, to which a volume might easily be devoted, must be condensed into a few paragraphs. But it is so important that I cannot pass it altogether by.

If any one should imagine that it was my intention to characterize the period of infancy and childhood as one of gross sensuality — of such a sort, for example, as really to justify in a psychological sense the term “original sin,” which our fathers used so freely to cover such facts as those of which I am about to speak, he would be very much mistaken. On the contrary, I feel myself entirely in sympathy with

## HUMAN MOTIVES

the best that the poets of childhood, such as Wordsworth, have maintained. Especially do I recognize the truth of the statement made by Froebel with regard to the play of childhood, which he characterizes as a pure and spiritual activity, typical of the inner natural life in man, saying of it that it gives "larger freedom and contentment, inner and outer rest, peace with the world." One of the best outcomes of our elaborate studies in philosophy and psychology, in ethics and morals and the art of living, would be the recovery, — in a form penetrated through with self-conscious recognition, — of the glorious self-forgetting spontaneity, the creativeness that knows no bounds, the sense of comradeship which competition only strengthens, the power of passing without a break from thought and fancy into act, the power of recognizing obstacles and limitations as fences to be climbed, in response to a challenge joyfully accepted, — of all

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

of which blessings most children have experienced something and imagined more under the form of play.

Nevertheless, it must be recognized also that childhood is a time of doubt, disappointment, and passion, from which, at the moment, children often long to get away.

One of the first things the child finds when he comes into his new world is that he has a greater capacity for sense perception than he has power to utilize. For this reason many of his feelings are not what psychologists call feelings of relation, — that is, not such as prompt him and help him to carry out better certain acts the utility of which he is later to discover. What wonder is it then, that thus placed, thus compelled to occupy himself almost exclusively with his own sensations and to build the world of his imagination largely on the basis of them, taking the persons about him, to a great extent,

## HUMAN MOTIVES

as sources of possible (and always personal) gratification ; what wonder is it that the young child should become an egoist, as he does?

Another striking fact about the infant is that he comes into the world as the inheritor of tendencies which had their origin and usefulness in dark periods of his development, of which we know the history only through the researches of biologists.

To pass hastily onward, I would simply state that in the child's next period he comes in contact with persons, that is, with society, — namely, the society of his mother and his nurse. The greatest real service that such persons can render the young child is to make of themselves a bridge over which he may pass into a broader life. But too often, led thereto by their own selfishness and ignorance, their own still living and active immaturity, they fail in this important mission and let them-

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

selves become of too much importance to the child in and for themselves.

I will summarize, in brief, by pointing out that childhood, consecrate it and admire it as we may, corresponds to the period of immaturity of the race. It is the Unshapen Land of the Greeks, the home of fantasies of power and longing.

One cannot too much admire the myth of Hercules (whose strength, it should be noted, lay not in his muscles but in his reason and his will) who strangled, when an infant in his cradle, the serpents sent against him by the envious Juno. The serpent, as most people are aware, represents two things: temptation, as in the Garden of Eden, and wisdom, as when it is made to symbolize the physician's power of healing. It is wholly within the accepted interpretation of primitive customs and mythology for us to assert, as *a* meaning if not *the* meaning, of this story, that Hercules, in strangling these serpents, sym-



## HUMAN MOTIVES

bolized the overcoming of temptation on the one hand and the gaining of wisdom and of force of character on the other. It will be remembered, for example, that among our own Indians the strength and courage of the conquered enemy are supposed to pass into the soul of the warrior by whom he has been vanquished.

It is needless to say that I appreciate, as well as any one, that most children are preserved from wandering very far into the blind alleys of self-assertion and of self-indulgence. Some distance they must wander, and some obstacles they must conquer. It is well for them that they have these obstacles to face; it is well also that the obstacles are not greater. But the duty devolves on those who guard and guide their footsteps to see that they learn not to disguise and repress their purposes, and do not go too far astray.

The subject of repression should be sufficiently intelligible in its main outlines



## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

to any person who has watched with moderate care his own mental processes; and so, also, should some of the reasons be clear to him for the resistance which every one instinctively opposes to the setting free of these repressed thoughts. Less evident would it seem, perhaps, to some persons, that the emotions which have been repressed in this fashion, and which are recovered with such difficulty, continue to play active parts in determining our conduct and forming our motives and our thoughts. The testimony for the validity of this principle has been extensively furnished, not alone by Freud, but by psychologists of all schools.

The distinctive feature of the unconscious life as defined by Freud is not revealed by the descriptions of those writers for whom the terms "unconscious" and "subconscious" have the same meaning. The number of experiences which a person has absolutely forgotten, in the ordinary

## HUMAN MOTIVES

sense of that word, or which lie for the moment outside the circle of his conscious attention is, of course, very large; but the interest of the unconscious for the psychoanalyst lies not alone in this fact, but as much and more in the fact of the energetic part which these groups of repressed and organized emotions continue to play, on which we turn our backs for the distinct reason that they have an interest for us and yet are felt to be out of harmony with the main purposes of our conscious lives.

If looked at in this way, it might be said that these repressed emotions, carefully concealed from us though they are, lie really near the surface of our minds. We close our eyes to them, indeed, but can find them, if we are willing, and have taught ourselves, to look for them. Should we look for them, and should we endeavor to break down the resistances within our minds that prompt us not to do so? This question is answered by different sorts of people

## THE PSYCHO-ANALYTIC MOVEMENT

in two different ways. Some persons feel that their repressions are natural and useful, and that instead of trying to reveal their troublesome emotions to themselves they should turn away from them and devote themselves to some work of usefulness in the community. So widely do circumstances vary that there is no general rule to give; and I have, indeed, studiously avoided going deeply into any medical or therapeutical argument. Two things, however, I will say. The first is that a person reaps no benefit from claiming that the tendencies which he deprecates are not his own, that *he* is not responsible for his unconscious thoughts. In my opinion this is one of the numerous reactions of defense, and one of an objectionable kind. What do we gain, and what does the world gain, either the world of science or the world of social life, through such a refusal on the part of any one to make himself responsible for what is really a portion of

## HUMAN MOTIVÉS

himself? It is not so much a question of who is responsible for these repressed emotions as it is of the fact that they are playing an important part in our lives and in the community, and that we are the only persons who can take charge of them.

It is a matter of choice with each person how far he will agree to accept the responsibility for his unconscious thoughts. He need not do so if he feels that his real welfare is best served by keeping them concealed and ignoring their existence, and if he is not hampered by a haunting consciousness of their presence. He does himself no indignity, on the other hand, if he chooses to consider and study their nature and to lay the ghosts of his fears and desires by meeting them face to face. To do this is usually to find that they indicate the presence of tendencies which are natural but which need to be understood, respected, and controlled.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Educational Bearings of Psycho-Analysis*

**T**HE question is often asked by persons interested in the psycho-analytic movement: "Is it doing anything toward the prevention of the evils to which it calls attention?" This chapter will take up a number of points bearing on the problems which the question raises. I begin by proposing a modification in the form of the question itself, so that it shall read: "Has the psycho-analytic movement brought to light any special principles that persons having to do with the education of children or interested in problems of social progress can teach themselves to utilize?"

The psycho-analytic method in its complete form is applicable only as between



## HUMAN MOTIVES

doctor and patient, and cannot be used except on a relatively small scale. If anything more extensive is to be accomplished this can be done only through the voluntary efforts of intelligent and interested persons who are willing to study at once themselves and those under their charge, and to restrain within modest limits their expectations of definite results. Neither teachers nor parents can make themselves psycho-analysts without a special training. What they can do is to recognize what the essential aims of the psycho-analytic method are, and to what its success is mainly due; and then to make themselves masters of a few of the principles which its use has emphasized, and to consider in what way these principles can be applied to children at large, in the schoolroom and at home.

The aim of the psycho-analytic method, as used in medical practice, is to bring the whole mass of thoughts and emotions



## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

which are actively influencing the motives and the conduct of a patient under the control of his conscious will. Recognizing the fact that these emotions have had no adequate outlet and are out of harmony with the main body of the motives which the patient, as a member of society, acknowledges as his own, the physician helps him to find an outlet for them in speech, and to discover in this way a means of reconciliation between them and "himself."

The patient is encouraged to give the fullest expression to his thoughts, and, to this end, to place himself, successively and repeatedly and by the aid of memory and imagination, in the various situations representing the deeper layers of his present ideas and emotions and those of his youth and, so far as possible, of his childhood and his infancy. These deep-going conversations are the equivalent, in aim, of those which every judicious mother and teacher gladly encourage child and pupil to

## HUMAN MOTIVES

carry on, so far as circumstances may permit. The sole purpose in undertaking them, in the case of the physician and his patient, is to aid the latter to define the conflicts which harass him and to find that the significance of these conflicts shifts as he transfers them on to higher levels and brings them within the reach of a wider knowledge and a broader and more generous outlook.

A conflict thus transferred to a higher level is a conflict largely solved; but in order that its expression on this level should be reached, an appreciative hearing must first be accorded to it on a level that corresponds to the fantasy-weaving days of childhood, when the real world was of a very different sort from any with which the adult, in his ignorance of himself, is still familiar. Stevenson has lighted up a small fragment of this situation in his story, "The Lantern Bearers." He makes many a reader thrill with sympathy for

## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

the members of this secret order, whose deep excitement "over nothing" might, in real life, have been dismissed with a smile, possibly with a rebuke.

But if an effort is required to get even thus far into our youth, how much harder is it to get with complete sympathy into those still earlier years which are in fact so full of significance for the remainder of our lives! Yet this is a task well worth the expenditure of much time and labor. The child should be assured of a ready hearing and of sympathy for wishes and ideas however grotesque, however foreign to the hearer's present thought. He should find in his parents or teachers persons for whom his childish and foolish fancies have a value, as they have for himself; patient listeners, who do not think him morbid because he feels an interest in questions as to the origin of his own physical or spiritual being. It can not be too strongly urged upon every mother that it is her business

## HUMAN MOTIVES

to understand the child's gropings, or at the least not to stifle or check his inquiries, whatever direction they may take.<sup>1</sup> The essential thing is that the child should be given the best possible chance to show all that he has in him, of understanding, of poetry, of personal power, and that these forces should be led gradually into the channels of broader social ends. He should neither be flattered, nor too much persuaded, nor too much indulged, nor too much dominated. If conformity is demanded in lesser matters, as it must be, care should be taken that it does not make itself felt as a controlling influence throughout.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I recommend to the careful reading of all educators an admirable book, "The Individual Delinquent," by William Healy, whose work in connection with the Juvenile Court of Chicago is well known.

<sup>2</sup> It is true that society hates a non-conformist, but the tendency to accept this attitude should be regarded with suspicion. Each individual may be said to be surrounded with an invisible net. So long as he conforms, he does not feel the net; but let him try to break away from conformity, and he finds himself a prisoner. This situation is, however, more subtle and more interesting than

## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

Above all, the possibility should be recognized by parents and teachers that to indulge or to dominate a child often means only to seek an outlet for one's own desires.

It is no doubt true that there is a certain danger of over-doing intimate conversations with children, just as there is danger attaching to almost every powerful influence. So long as free talking means continuous progress, and especially so long as it is found to lead to a greater sense of freedom and happiness, to an increased participation in the child's companionship, its effect may justly be estimated as beneficial. If the time arrives when the desire to talk becomes a source of undue excitement or morbid gratification on the child's part, it should be regarded as the con-

the illustration would suggest. A certain amount of non-conformity is permitted, so that we may have the sense of being free. Deceived in this way, many persons fail to realize to what extent they are enslaved. But the sense of dependence may, in its turn, be coveted and is a temptation to be shunned.



## HUMAN MOTIVES

dition calling for careful consideration on its own merits.

The criterion of willingness on the part of the child to recognize himself as a social being, whether in play or work, is of the highest value. It is the community which is the unit, not the individual regarded as alone. Even the most misanthropic, the most shy, self-conscious, and unsociable or a-sociable of persons virtually recognizes this truth. To social life of some sort the affection and devotion of the parent should be the avenue and the bridge.

I am not dealing here, however, with the innumerable troubles and dangers to which children are exposed, but am only suggesting measures which all thoughtful and intelligent parents can profitably use with a view to keeping their children from forming too strongly the repression habit. Any emotional excess carries with it a certain danger, and yet no development can be ideal. Every decision involves cutting



## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

oneself off from some other choice, and the only question is what general rules can be adopted through which to place oneself within the range of favorable chances. The river of life must flow onward, and the child must learn to forget himself in affection, play, and work. It is certain, however, that there will be eddies and backwaters in the river which will more or less impede its flow.

Another danger that the researches of psycho-analysts have done much to illuminate has reference to the significance of this or that act, — this or that objectionable or self-indulgent habit, for example, — regarded in itself. I wish to call attention to the fact that too much stress is often laid upon the act, and too little upon the tendency of which the particular act may be a sign. The significance, for educational purposes, of an act *interpreted as a sign* is often very great, whereas if the attention of the parent and the child is concentrated

## HUMAN MOTIVES

on the act itself the result may be that the underlying tendency passes uncorrected and shows itself in some new form. The ancient myth of the Old Man of the Sea may profitably be recalled in this connection, as illustrating how fertile a dominant tendency may show itself in the invention of ever new manifestations of itself. Hercules, in this instance, who had the intelligence to see through these diversities of form to the motive that underlay them, may serve as the representative of the intelligent parent or teacher who does not allow his imagination to be carried away too easily with the idea that because he has induced the child to repress some outward habit he has necessarily aided him thereby to overcome the self-indulgent motive of which the habit was only one expression.

The next question that arises is as to the mental qualifications of the parent or the teacher to serve as instructor of the

## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

child. I believe that in preparation for this task they could and should scrutinize carefully their own unconscious tendencies and motives. In making this attempt they should determine to avoid the pitfall of self-depreciation and self-reproach, — a habit which is exceedingly enticing because it can mask itself as a rational acknowledgment of error, whereas it is in reality little else than a form of egotism. The intelligent commander wishing to push forward against an enemy that he fears does not pause long to dwell upon his mistakes; and yet he makes himself aware of them. What is needed by most people is more knowledge of the possibilities, capacities, and dangers which lie about the pathways of their children and themselves; but the habit of passing judgments and forming moral estimates is more likely to hamper than to help. On the other hand, any one may properly feel at liberty to view with suspicion emotional excess in

## HUMAN MOTIVES

every form. Each individual must decide, with reference to a given case, what form he will let his feelings take, but should prepare himself to discover that an over-strong emotion of one sort is pretty certain to be counterbalanced by some opposing tendency of which he is unaware. The wisest person is he who can clearly see both these antagonistic tendencies. But it is of some value to know that they are there, and strengthened by that knowledge to march forward toward the performance of our tasks, filled with sympathy for our neighbors, and filled, too, with the strong desire to do our best for the welfare of the community.

There is a tendency among physicians and teachers to make their personal influence over their patients or pupils count as too strong a factor. They do not sufficiently realize, in doing this, that the ultimate result may be to diminish the latter's sense of independence. I emphasize this point

## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

because psycho-analysts have studied it with especial care. They have shown the dangers and objections attendant on such relations and have taken pains to guard their patients and themselves against them.

Through considering the subject of sickness, on the one hand, and health, on the other, and the relationship between the two, I learned long ago to realize that nervous invalids are indistinguishable, both in theory and practice, from the people who are classified as "well." There are few among us who have not suffered in some measure under unreasonable fears, the sense of estrangement, compulsions, obsessions or analogous disorders, such as destroy the savor of life for so many fine, courageous persons, and none who have not felt the yoke of temperamental traits that are of the same origin with these symptoms. Almost all men, when exposed to stress and strain, show characteristics of objectionable sorts. In reality, these charac-



## HUMAN MOTIVES

teristics should be thought of as always present although usually concealed, and there is no sufficient reason why one person should plume himself on the absence of these traits or why another should blame himself because he has them. Mental good health is more clearly evidenced by the desire to learn how best to deal with the qualities of which we find ourselves in charge than in fixing the gaze on the respects in which we seem to be superior. It might be said that all men warm their hands at the fire where some get burned, — the fire, namely, of emotional excitement and repression, — and we should not hesitate to admit this fact.

The true relationship between “sickness” and “health,” from the particular point of view here under consideration, becomes much clearer when the fact is borne in mind that the symptoms of disease in general are to be thought of as in part the signs of reactions of a normal



## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

sort. Disease is often popularly considered as nothing but a "visitation," a misfortune, to be recovered from if possible and otherwise to be endured with such fortitude as one can muster. With increasing knowledge of pathological processes it became evident, however, many years ago, that a good many of the phenomena, even of bodily disease, could be better classified as phenomena of health. Reactions of this sort (that is, healthy responses on the part of the organism to the challenge of difficulty) are always to be discovered if one looks for them. Nature is always active, and just as surely as water seeks everywhere its level or as melted wax accommodates itself to rough surfaces so does this tendency toward the establishment of new equilibriums show itself, even from the moment when the forces of destruction set about their work. The results of these reactions are interesting and instructive from the scientific standpoint,

## HUMAN MOTIVES

but not invariably satisfactory from the standpoint of the individual regarded as a member of society. Compensation, oftentimes so useful, may pass into over-compensation of a harmful sort. We must be prepared, in any case, to see a very different result from that which our narrow experience had led us to expect. In our dread of responsibility and of getting far from "goal" we often underrate the resources of nature and of ourselves, and instinctively repel every change even if for a gain. But no gain comes without sacrifice, and Emerson shows himself to be a sound observer in saying :

"When good is near you, when you have life in yourself, it is not by any known or accustomed way; you shall not discern the footprints of any other; you shall not see the face of man; you shall not hear any name;—the way, the thought, the good, shall be wholly strange and new."

I first learned the propriety of thus looking upon disease as a "reaction" and

## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

upon many of its phenomena as actual indications of progress toward a new sort of health, at a period, about forty years ago, when it was my privilege to become acquainted with J. Hughlings Jackson of London, one of the great philosophers in medicine. I well remember the strong impression made upon my mind when he pointed out that what we were in the habit of calling the signs of defect and failure on the part of human organisms assumed to be suffering under some malign influence, were really signs of an instinctive attempt on the part of those organisms to reassert themselves. To use the illustration that Jackson then employed, let us suppose we are in the presence of some one who, in consequence of a lesion of the brain, is unable to talk intelligibly, and who, in trying to do so, gives forth a flood of incoherent sounds. To the friends of such a patient each new utterance of this sort is one sign the more of the misfortune which

## HUMAN MOTIVES

has befallen him and seems to open a new vista into a distressing future. But let the observer think himself more accurately into the situation, endeavoring from the standpoint of scientific appreciation to look deeply into the process going on within the patient's mind and brain, and it will be seen that behind all this jargon speech there lies a genuine effort to find means of adequate expression, and that forces are at work in him which tend, on the whole, toward the recovery of a relatively stable equilibrium. What we, then, as students of scientific truth, desiring to become familiar with the resources of life at its best, should let ourselves be most impressed with, is not the signs of disorganization in such a patient's case, but the signs of a healthy power and determination on the part of the elemental forces of his being to find some new means of readjustment. These elemental forces should be reinforced by insight, intelligence, and will.

## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

“Fear not then, thou child infirm,  
There’s no god dare wrong a worm;  
Laurel crowns cleave to deserts,  
And power to him who power exerts.  
Hast not thy share? On winged feet,  
Lo ! it rushes thee to meet;  
And all that Nature made thy own,  
Floating in air or pent in stone,  
Will rive the hills and swim the sea,  
And, like thy shadow, follow thee.”

If one compares a series of these reactions, differing from each other in complexity, it will be found possible, after extending the list somewhat at each end, to obtain a fresh and striking illustration of one of the main theses of this book.

The principal forms of reaction thus far considered have been those involving biological and pathological processes, rather than those of the mental life. In order to bring out clearly, however, the idea that I have in mind, I will call to the attention of the reader that there are other forms of response which are characteristic of



## HUMAN MOTIVES

certain processes of nature that do not involve organic life at all, and yet which simulate reactions of organic life. Some of the phenomena relating to the repair of injured crystals are of this sort, and there are others which show perhaps even more strikingly than this, that tendencies exist which cause even the inorganic world to react in a quasi-purposive manner to disturbances of its equilibrium. In the case of the crystals, no matter what the injury may be, the outcome of these responses is, under favorable conditions restoration of the damaged structure to its original form.

Not only this, but chemists and physicists have shown <sup>1</sup> that a closer relationship than has usually been recognized exists between natural phenomena and the higher needs of organic life. The earth's crust, it would appear, was prepared for the coming of beings of the type and with the requirements of man.

<sup>1</sup> L. J. Henderson: "Fitness of Environment."



## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

Reactions on the next higher level are of the type of those which biologists have dealt with under the name of tropisms; and with them may be ranged the phenomena which have been studied by physicians with reference to the repair of wounds. Passing to a higher level still, we come to the reactions that are mainly in question in this chapter, through which the symptoms of nervous invalidism come into existence. In these reactions, the patient's conscious intelligence seems to take no part; but on the other hand the unconscious processes are extensively concerned in their production. And since these unconscious processes are hardly to be spoken of except as portions of our personalities, — portions for which we should, strictly speaking, make ourselves responsible, — it may be said that here the mental life intervenes strongly in the determination of the outcome.

It will, I trust, be understood that these

## HUMAN MOTIVES

nervous symptoms differ in no essential respect from a large group of other phenomena which would ordinarily be classified as temperamental traits; and for the sake of making the comparison seem more reasonable, we will assume that reference is here made to traits which cause annoyance to those possessing them, or interfere with their happiness and their usefulness as members of society. The generalizations of Hughlings Jackson were cited mainly to show that the conceptions with reference to disease which we employ to serve our daily needs are misleading when they are adopted as the basis of a scientific classification. I make this statement here again in the hope that by offering a somewhat more scientific explanation of these traits and symptoms I can make it easier for those who are hampered by them to deal with them to better purpose. It is an important fact that the elemental, pleasure-loving tendencies of our nature, which are

## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

always prominent in childhood, continue to make themselves felt in later years, though without coming clearly to our consciousness. At the same time every one is under the necessity of conforming to social conventions, and to the demands of conscience which, broadly speaking, is of social origin. Such being the case, let us assume that a child, in consequence of conflicts within his mind occurring as the result of temptations — not necessarily very important from the adult standpoint — acquires the habit of anxiety. Groping for means to free himself from this state, he instinctively refers this anxiety to some special cause; and thus is developed one or another, or a series, of the meaningless fears of which every one has heard and which most persons have experienced.

The point to which I desire to call attention is that to thus shift the burden of the anxiety from its unknown origin to an apparently reasonable cause which is

## HUMAN MOTIVES

not in fact the real cause, is a sort of response which in a sense represents a "gain." Wholly incapable of arguing out the whole process in his mind, the child feels the original strain of the conflict as something from which he seeks relief. By dint of what we will now speak of as a reaction (casting aside the misleading name of "illness"), he states the problem to himself in a form which has at least the appearance of rationality, not realizing that in his symptoms his repressed emotions are present in disguise.

Looking at the matter in this way, we can see that the reaction as a whole, while it induces a result which in itself is undesirable, and one for which those who desire to help the child would gladly substitute a better outcome, brings with it an adjustment which, if his unconscious mind had the power to express itself, would be recognized as beneficial. The number of possible reactions of this kind is almost indefi-

## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

*nitely large, and they occur, wholly or in part, without the conscious awareness or coöperation of the person concerned.*

The justice of this conception becomes clearer if one scrutinizes the significance of one's own fits of temporary depression, or if one considers the psychology of a fit of anger, or of self-depreciation. These are illustrations of the principle that I have in mind. Whatever else "the blues" accomplish, they certainly afford us a chance to bury ourselves in a sea of self-engrossment; and as for passion, it is far easier to fly into that state than it is to find a rational solution of a given difficulty. We do not desire, in one sense, either the depression or the anger; that is, in the fullness of our higher self-conscious wishes we do not so desire. For this reason the idea is always resented that we lend ourselves to such results as these. Nevertheless, it is we who fall into these states and it is we who derive whatever partial and



## HUMAN MOTIVES

unsatisfactory benefit is obtainable through them. If, therefore, we choose to place ourselves in an attitude of responsibility toward our mental processes, the terms "desire" and "gain" as applying to these symptoms or reactions seem not wholly out of place.

This same statement may be made of a large proportion of our common symptoms, as well as of the objectionable traits and tendencies of emotion in general. There is something in the person so reacting that welcomes the result, even if the person as a whole would gladly have rejected it.

Finally, we come to the highest reactions of all, — those which every one would recognize to be in harmony with his best purposes and will and would wish to make habitual. They involve self-sacrifice and a postponement of narrower and more personal desires in the interests of the larger social whole of which each individual is a member and a representative.



## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

If, now, we glance once more over this whole series of reactions, what shall we consider as their nature? It is impossible to regard some of them as of one origin and the rest as of a wholly different sort, without denying the unity of nature. If the simpler reactions are determined by some influence of which a physical or a chemical phenomenon is usually to be regarded as the type, have we a right to classify the rest, even those which have here been denominated as highest, in the same category? On the other hand, shall we follow the reverse process and regard the whole series as in some sense "personal"? I have said enough to indicate that my judgment is in favor of the latter choice; and I call attention to the fact that a number of eminent students of evolution have pointed out that the law of the survival of the fittest no longer seems to afford an adequate explanation of conduct the moment we pass from the

## HUMAN MOTIVES

consideration of the acts of animals lower in the scale than man to the motives and the acts of man himself.

Treatment by psycho-analysis, in brief, is a kind of education. The largest part of the benefit to be derived from it is to be obtained not so much through the discovery of the special hidden cause or causes of this or that particular symptom, as through the general development of character that goes on gradually as a result of the removal of the inhibitions by which this development which is part of the normal birthright of every individual had been hitherto obstructed. It is sometimes tempting, for the sake of a striking simile, to recall to oneself the story of the "Frog Prince" or some kindred fairy-tale or myth, as hinting at the possibility of a sudden change of temperament in the desired direction. But although the simile is a sound one if rightly used, a fairer illustration of the course of improvement in most cases

## EDUCATIONAL BEARINGS

would be the process of repair through which an organism long a prey to some disease is gradually aided to regain its health.

In proportion as one gains a more fully developed character, through the removal of fixations or harmful trends of character and temperament, and of the inhibitions based thereon — that is, in proportion as one exchanges immaturity for maturity through education — in this same proportion will one's unfavorable tendencies gradually pass away, or undergo modification for the better.

## CHAPTER V

### *Instincts and Ideals*

**I** PRESENT in this chapter two diagrams and a table which are intended to explain, as if seen from a new angle, some of the principles asserted in the foregoing pages, together with certain others that have not as yet been offered. The first two figures should be understood simply as illustrating the doctrine that both of the two forms of influence so frequently referred to make themselves felt at every point in a person's life and play their respective parts in the determination of all his acts.

Figure I represents the view that a man's ideal possibilities are implicitly and inferentially present (or "immanent") in all that he is and does throughout his life.

## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

These ideal possibilities are active in proportion to the degree that the individual life conforms to the type of the universe-life, and are therefore more effective according as the individual is more really mature; but it is suggested that they exist as real forces even in earliest infancy.

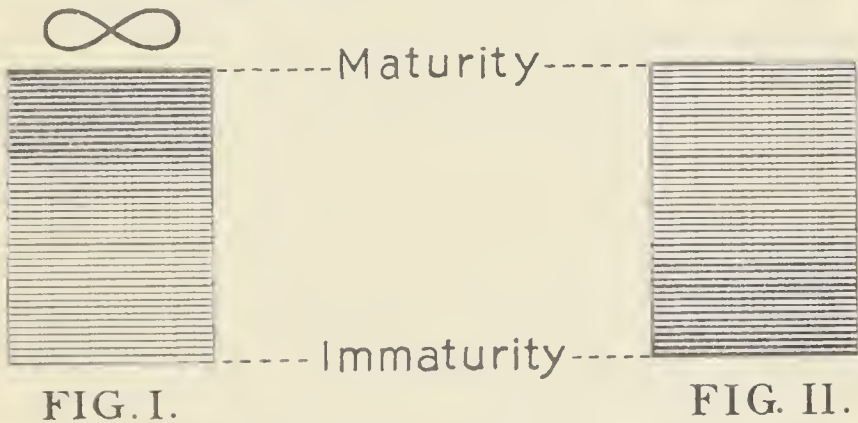


Figure II shows that the converse is true of a man's tendency to adaptation and compromise. This tendency also is present throughout life, but is greater or less according as immaturity is greater or less.

The most "real" thing about a man may be defined, I think, as the creative

## HUMAN MOTIVES

spirit which is immanent in him and without which he cannot do his best. This immanent, creative energy I have indicated in Figure I by the mathematical sign of infinity.

Taken at their face value, these figures might seem to imply a belief on my part that the influence which I have designated as man's immanent ideal is felt more in later life than it is in infancy, and that the reverse is true of the influences which attend the necessity of dealing with the repressed emotions and their consequences. Such an assertion as this would be only relatively true, however, and if it had been convenient I should have avoided altogether, by the use of different colors, the implication given through the heavier and lighter shading. The idea presented has been brought forward in earlier pages, and seems indeed simple enough. But it is not usually accepted to the extent that I believe it should be.



## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

With regard to the doctrine in accordance with which "immanence" is possible and at the same time not incompatible with personal independence, I would ask again that each person consider his relation to his own thoughts, to his "team," his family, or his country. If it be urged that the influence of one's "team," or family, or country is immanent only in the sense that it forms a part of one's subconscious thoughts, I can only say that I think such an objection is philosophically untenable and incomplete. If, instead of emphasizing the physical separateness of an individual, one considers him as an incident in the continuous life of innumerable lines of energy, it will seem easier to admit, I think, that an individual life passes over into other lives. The seedling of a tree, if considered at any given moment, may be called an independent thing or organism. But looked at in another way, this portion of the

## HUMAN MOTIVES

tree's life is certainly not to be considered as apart from the creative energy that made that tree possible and might create others of like sort. In each and every particular animal or plant the creative energy of the corresponding species is certainly "immanent"; and if we had the perspicacity to see it we should undoubtedly find some sign, some anatomical mark even, in each part of such an organism, at each moment of its development, in which its entire history would be hinted at or foreshadowed. This is a proposition which the microscope cannot demonstrate as true. But when one looks at a fern in the early summer and finds at its root the preparation for the new ferns of the next year, it seems impossible to doubt that one is in the presence of a tendency which could be traced much further.

Figures I and II, as I have said, illustrate the same principle, but in Figure II the application of the principle is reversed.

## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

As the better is immanent in the less good, and as a man's best possibilities exert an influence even while the necessity for adaptation and compromise seems present, so the necessity for adaptation and compromise extends throughout his life and makes its influence felt in modifying even the most constructive acts and thoughts.

One illustration will be sufficient at this point, though many others will be found scattered through the book. I take it from the great subject of love, parent alike of good and harm. The best that this magic word implies corresponds to the best possibilities of man's nature. But the great and sacred word may be used like the flag of an honorable nation hoisted over a pirate's ship. To be genuine and at its best, the love for another person should mean the desire to do for that person the best that could be done, or to arouse in him the best that he is capable

## HUMAN MOTIVES

of expressing. It aims to induce in the person loved something of the same sense of freedom and unselfish devotion by which it is itself inspired. A close inspection often reveals the fact that even when love for another seems most warm the dominant impulse may be a passionate love of self. This admixture should be recognized and the misplaced energy gradually diverted to a better channel. But the situation should not be complicated through the introduction of self-depreciation, which leads to no good outcome.

# INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

## TABLE

<i>Disinterested love</i>	Conscious Will	CONSTRUCTIVE TENDENCIES
<i>Conscious reason</i>		
<i>Imagination</i> serving the interests of reason		
<i>Conscious will</i> , based on reason		
<i>Genuineness</i> , as in art, science, and activity in any department of life		
<i>Adaptation</i> , consciously directed		
<i>Knowledge</i>		
<i>Rationalization</i> used to secure relief from the sense of disharmony	Repressed emotions: Blind Will	ADAPTIVE TENDENCIES
<i>Compromise unconsciously adopted</i>		
<i>Reactions of defense</i>		
<i>Self-assertion</i> , sometimes useful, sometimes harmful		
“ <i>Will to Power</i> ”		
<i>Egoism</i> ; self-love.		
<i>Fantasy</i> , of immature type, used in the interests of self-love, sense of power and excitement		
<i>Passion</i> ; emotional excess, fear based on desire, etc., etc.		
<i>Cravings</i> ; persistence of immature, elemental desires, desire to inflict or suffer pain		
<i>Instincts</i>		
<i>Undifferentiated energy in emotional form</i>		

## HUMAN MOTIVES

This table aims to make easier of comprehension some of the different stages through which every person must pass in the course of his journey from the period of birth, and more especially from the time when as a child he begins to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, up to the later period when, by the aid of experience well utilized, he reaches the summit of his possibilities. Although, in general terms, this journey is spoken of as the passage from youth to mature life, it would be better characterized, in a psychological sense, as a passage from a virtual immaturity to a virtual maturity. For maturity does not necessarily imply fullness of years; nor is fullness of years capable by itself of eliminating immaturity.

It seemed to me impossible to represent in a diagram the interpenetration and coalescence which characterize the different qualities suggested in the table. Students of psychology know well that into each



## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

act and thought of a given moment the whole past experience of the actor or the thinker enters. But one may go further than this and assert, as I have endeavored to make clear, that in a certain sense the possibilities of the future are foreshadowed in the occurrences of the present.

It is also impossible to indicate by the table the fact that the denominations used are intended to be suggestive only, and that their significance changes with the changing circumstances of a given case. Self-assertion and egoism, for example, are of value if thought of, not as a final state but as bridges or stepping-stones toward some better outcome. Self-assertion and egoism may, however, be only euphemisms for overbearing domination, the narrowness which robs sympathy of its best attributes, and thoughtlessness pointing toward cruelty. Each one of these objectionable qualities may be hidden (through repression), though its presence in the uncon-

## HUMAN MOTIVES

scious mind may be hinted at through the outward display of its opposite, just as love and hate, fear and desire, etc., form natural couples, only one half of which is manifested externally. More common than this is the situation in which self-assertion limits progress, as seen in the case of the wife of the clergyman in "The Servant in the House," and in the narrow attitudes of religious sects, sometimes passing into a latitudinarianism which in its turn, runs the danger of sinking into indifferentism.

It is unnecessary to say more about the contrast between disinterested love and passionate or self-love. But a word may be added about the contrast which this tabular view points out between the power of imagination and fantasy in its different forms. One often hears it said that the imagination, so vivid in the child, but present at all ages, is one of man's most splendid attributes. And so it is, in so

## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

far as it fulfils its best offices and serves the constructive interests of the highest reason, love, and will. But here again, as in the case of love, too little distinction is made between the uses to which imagination can be put. Sometimes, as so often happens in the case of the child and the immature adult, or of the hidden, immature yet active portion of each person's nature, this noble gift is employed for the sake of furnishing excitement as an amusement, and the results of over-indulgence in this habit are disastrous. Too often it leads to the pernicious discovery that the dullness of life can be readily exchanged for, or compensated by, a series of dramas which one's power of unconscious fantasy-building can easily make as exciting as may be desired (that is, as exciting as one's habits of childhood have set up the taste for). But, unfortunately, while the imagined tragedies of childhood as pictured in fantasies and daydreams may be sources

## HUMAN MOTIVES

of gratification only, the same imagined tragedies, clothed in the garments which the real fears of adult life have woven, form companions of a very different sort.

The better use of the imagination is that of serving to illuminate the dark and dull places of one's life and of giving clues to the investigating power of reason. It is with the repression into the subconscious life of the fantasies of immature type that their potency for harm begins.

In the passage from the narrow life of immaturity, egoism, passion, craving, and self-assertion — cultivated in and for themselves — to the disinterested life which it is every one's birthright to enjoy, there are many intermediate goals, some of which might count virtually as the final goal. I have attempted, in the table, to indicate the value of some of these results, by speaking of "genuineness," as in art, science, and occupations of all sorts. The chemist working, perhaps, unseen and un-

## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

known in his laboratory, but with the rest of mankind inferentially and virtually present in his mind, is in reality doing constructively social work of a high order. So, too, there are persons who do not profess religion, many indeed who may avowedly discard religion in the ordinary sense, yet who are moving, even in so doing, toward a life of ideal usefulness, in the same sense that this is true of persons of the Abou Ben Adhem type. I would only urge that such workers might profitably go one step further than they do, and become the conscious and out-spoken advocates of the principles which they practice. The person whose mind works rationally, and who is willing to think out his thoughts and to accept the ultimate conclusions to which his inferences lead, surely gains something of value through a more positive assertion of his faith.

Having thus, I trust, made it clear that I have placed at one end of this table the



## HUMAN MOTIVES

qualities which mark one of the poles of human motives and at the other end the qualities which mark the other pole, I would call attention to a few other points of interest which the table may help to make more clear. In the first place, the attempts at self-satisfying "rationalization," etc., are the attempts which every individual makes, from earliest childhood onward, to square the world with his desire on the one hand and with his limited intelligence and limited power of love, will, and insight, on the other. Feeling apprehensive, or inclined to worry, or in any sense threatened with discomfort, he adopts an explanation which satisfies him for the moment, and yet which is very far from laying bare the real cause of the uncomfortable situation. This real cause lies usually in his own temperament and is closely related to a variety of experiences of early life through which the tendency in question was emphasized and intensified.



## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

All of us are subject to this habit, and if it seems a necessary one and does bring us a certain amount of relief, yet it has its very objectionable side. The best method by which to break away from this rationalizing habit is to make abundant use of knowledge and self-scrutiny.

I have placed "knowledge" between "genuineness" and the rationalizing and egoistic tendencies, because knowledge is, in its pure form, a tool which we can use as if relatively, though of course not absolutely detached from the other qualities of the mind.

Another point should be made clear. The defect in all the genetic methods of studying human nature is that they assume as "given" the energies that express themselves as "instincts," or in the "tropisms" and other vital processes which antedate our instincts and are believed to explain them. But this habit of procedure, while it is necessary for the researches in ques-

## HUMAN MOTIVES

tion, indicates a limitation of their usefulness. It is all very well to say that our instincts, when brought into conflict with one another, work out to this or that result. But from what source do our instincts come? I believe there is only one possible source of all power in the world. Good, bad, and indifferent, so long as we are anything at all, we are the children of the self-active energy, the "purus actus," of which the whole universe and each smallest part of it consist.

It is impossible to express through a diagram or table the fact to which I wish next to call attention, but reference to it belongs in this place. The essential function of all life is to reproduce and to perpetuate itself, in some form. To live or to think is, in essence, to endeavor completely to express, and thus to reproduce, ourselves, in our dealings with the outer world and with all the problems which come before us. Every motive is a creative

## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

tendency, — a tendency to make some new step toward the establishment of a relationship between the world without us and the world within us. Biology teaches the same lesson.

Finally, I wish to call attention to the fact that the different tendencies of human nature to which different motives correspond, may be thought of better as superimposed, one upon the other (or as interwoven or mutually interpenetrating), than as arranged in the linear series which the necessities of diagram and table-making require. Whenever a person finds himself confronted by a difficult problem, — a situation which repeats itself with each one of us at every moment, — he must necessarily meet that problem in a great many different ways at once. He seems to respond to it finally with a single act, due, one might suppose, to a single motive. But if we had the power to look into the facts, we should find that the problem had

## HUMAN MOTIVES

appealed to every layer, so to speak, of the man's nature, and that the various responses corresponding to these different layers had played definite parts in the determination of the result. The final act of response to such a problem fails to give any adequate idea of the different elements of this medley of emotions and of thoughts, although expert observers can see in it something of the medley.

The inferences which I desire to draw are two in number: In the first place, all these partial emotions lend a certain richness to the result conceived of as a complex thought or as a motive; and, again, the analysis of these complex thoughts and emotions into their partial elements is often of the highest value.

I had at first intended to introduce a diagram to indicate the tendency which the development of every individual exhibits in greater or less measure, to become checked or arrested at one or another stage,

## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

with the result that subsequent development becomes modified in a specific way. It seemed probable, however, that this would give rise to misunderstandings, and the attempt was abandoned.

It is common enough to hear it said that this or that person has never thoroughly grown up, but remains in some respects a child, or reverts easily to childish ways. Few of those who make such a remark realize, however, to what degree it is possible to define the meaning of this statement, or how important it sometimes is to do so. Neither is it sufficiently recognized that, in another sense, the period of childhood may be taken as typical of the best outcome of one's development.<sup>1</sup>

Childhood may be divided into several important phases. There is the phase of birth, the phase of growing interest on the part of the child in himself (which may take on a very intense form), and the

<sup>1</sup> Wordsworth's Ode, "Intimations of Immortality."



## HUMAN MOTIVES

phase of interest in others, first as resembling and repeating himself, then as furnishing a supplement to himself and giving an opportunity for the expenditure of rapidly evolving interest and affection. It has been found that instead of going steadily onward through these different phases toward a further stage of development in which better possibilities will become revealed, the child's progress may be checked in any one of them in such a way that the main line of development is interfered with to a greater or less degree, and sometimes seriously. These relative arrests, or "fixations," give rise to special sorts of cravings or temptations which always remain lurking in the background. The kind of fixation or arrest which it is easiest to understand is that which results in egoism of an aggravated sort. The tendency to be egoistic, to love to see oneself on a pinnacle without regard to the way in which one gets there, is always



## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

present in some measure and is often very difficult to shake off. Child or man, we all long to see ourselves prominent, and instinctively devise a thousand ways of cultivating this longing without seeming to ourselves to be doing so. The child in his development may be supposed to touch, or follow for short distances, many lines of evolution which he shortly afterward rejects. And yet, in times of stress, he is likely to revert to them again because they represent periods of his existence which in his infancy and immaturity made strong claims on his attention.

I have attempted in Figure III to indicate a few of these side-tracks, the psychological history of which is so remarkable, and which are to be thought of as occurring (under the influence of some special stress) as the secondary result of a relative arrest of development at one or another phase of infancy (not indicated in the figure). The more important of these side-tracks are

## HUMAN MOTIVES

the inveterate egoism above mentioned, the tendency to over-done individualism, self-assertion, "will to power," through which the development of individuals and

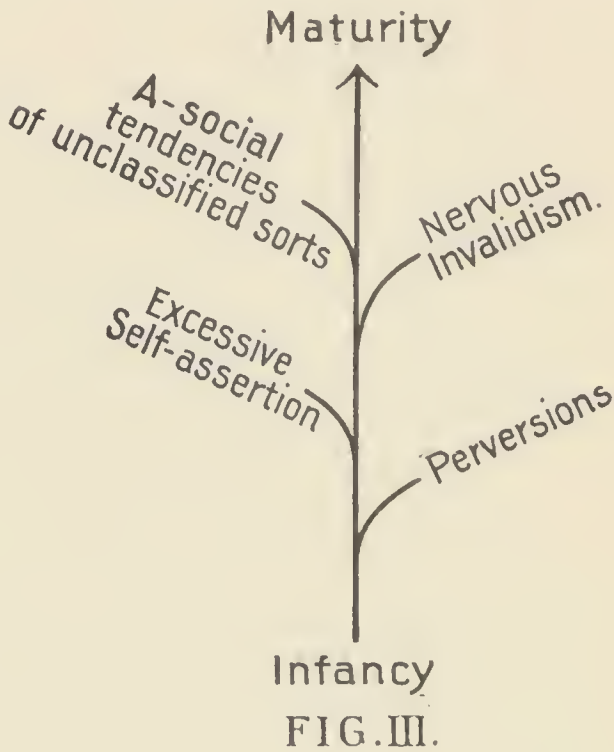


FIG.III.

nations is often checked. Individualism and self-assertion have at times been lauded as so valuable that to attack them seems almost a ground for criticism. And indeed it is true that the willingness to go

## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

forward and bear one's burdens and if possible one's neighbor's, to say "No," to espouse a cause which is unpopular, to cast aside the tendency to seek excuses for one's existence, to expose oneself to risk of life or reputation, indicates a possible line of progress of a fine sort. Such willingness means progress if it leads onward to something better still; but if this does not happen, it indicates a real arrest. The individualism which plays so large a part in the poems and essays of Emerson, for example, and which was quietly but firmly exemplified by him in life, constitutes a noble trait. But all readers of Emerson must be aware that this doctrine was preached by him as a stepping-stone toward the same recognition of dependence on duties and ideals that I have endeavored in this essay to emphasize as important. One cannot read Nietzsche's fiery lines without feeling that his individualism also had much to recommend

## HUMAN MOTIVES

it, based, as it was, on the doctrine of the voluntary endorsement of that which each person finds genuinely present in himself. What was in Nietzsche's mind, when he did not go too far, was like that which was in Emerson's mind when he said, "If I am the Devil's child, I will live from the Devil." But, unfortunately, this self-assertiveness can be terribly overdone, with the result that the person subject to it becomes an advocate of criticism gone mad, instead of a center of helpfulness to his neighbors and his community.

One should remember Shakespeare's striking lines :

. . . "O, it is excellent  
To have a giant's strength ; but it is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant."

The tendency to use one's strength like a giant (that is, like an overgrown but immature being) is the tendency which is often cultivated under the false notion that to do so is a sign of manly courage ; but

## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

there are times when the "courage to let the courage sink" <sup>1</sup> is a sign of greater promise, both for the individual and for mankind.

It is with reference to this point that I would call attention again to the obligation which those persons are under who believe, as I do, in the importance of studying motives with reference to the creative forces that underlie them, to realize that neither self-assertion, nor efficiency, nor the "will to power" can be taken as a final goal. It is quite amazing how prevalent the contrary notion is. How much easier it is to arouse a cry of sympathy for such martial or stoical appeals as those contained in the "Invictus" by Henley, and Kipling's "If," than for many a far nobler appeal that relies on the belief that deep-seated, genuine devotion to the common welfare, as expressing our complete selves, is the only standard on which we should ultimately rely!

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Hugh Clough: "The Higher Courage."

## HUMAN MOTIVES

The moment individualism ceases to be a stepping-stone to something better and gets itself ranked as a goal to be pursued in and for itself alone, it unmask itself as a sign that the development of the individual received a check at an earlier stage, and that we have before us a situation of immaturity.

Analogous to the side lines and relatively blind alleys referred to in the foregoing pages is the strong craving which is felt by every one from time to time, and by some persons in an insistent form, to escape from the steep and narrow path of responsibility and effort and to get back into conditions of rest and pleasure. This craving for relaxation and irresponsibility is the longing to get back into the period of childhood, not as it exists, but as we picture it to ourselves. The childhood of most persons is not wholly a time of unalloyed happiness, but often a period of renunciation, sorrow, and disappointment.



## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

The infant is no sooner born than he begins to indicate by his cries (as Ferenczi has so well explained) his dim sense of loss. And then and there begins the longing for what has been and is no more, which never wholly ceases.

Happiness and unhappiness occur, in childhood as in later years, not continuously, but in alternation. The sickening suspicion that one is "not wanted," the dread of isolation and of reprobation or self-reprobation, the fears of ridicule and of the dark and a thousand kindred fears represent situations not to be ignored. The image of childhood which the adult delights to dwell upon contains in far greater abundance and in purer form the characteristics that make the period a golden one than does the period itself. Art and literature also have constantly conspired with the imagination of each individual to make this phase that which we would fain believe it to have been.

## HUMAN MOTIVES

It is true, however, that every individual, as well in adult life as in infancy and old age, instinctively supplements the details of the world of his actual knowledge and of his toil and pain, with the far wider and more satisfying world of his imagination, and escapes when he can from the former to the latter, just as many people escape — if they can find excuse to do so — from the situations of actual responsibility to situations from which responsibility is absent.<sup>1</sup>

An analogy might be pointed out between this process of retrogression and the analogous process well known to go on as one of the features of evolution. Animal species and plants revert to forms that maintain themselves more easily, — that is, to forms that do not require so much vital energy for their maintenance as the more complex forms from which the reversion has taken place. In the old saying of doubtful accuracy, "If you scratch a Rus-

<sup>1</sup> See Faguet's recent book, "The Dread of Responsibility."

## INSTINCTS AND IDEALS

sian you will find a Tartar," we see the hint of another form of this reversion, and the imagination of any one, even when not stimulated by the history of war, will supply plenty of instances of like kind. The state indicated by the name "Tartar" could be better expressed in psychological terms as the state, so common in childhood, when the tendency is present which the adult, in looking back upon it, characterizes as cruel. People are too ready to accept these tendencies in themselves and the motives that go with them, without realizing the importance of hunting them to their lairs and calling them by names that need not necessarily be "hard" in the adult sense, but should clearly characterize their true origin.

Too easy contentment is the condition to be mainly dreaded. The whole river of life, source and all, belongs inferentially to every man; but in order to enter into the value of this possession, we should

## HUMAN MOTIVES

learn to see its dangerous cataracts and whirlpools as well as the calm reaches over which we may pass to and fro without danger. If we must carry within the depths of our lives, without realizing that we do so, an Unshapen Land of emotions where Gorgons and Titans have their home, we should remember that the denizens of this unshapen land represent sources of undifferentiated energy which we, like Perseus, may conquer and make our own.

Finally, I wish to forestall the criticism which might easily be made, that I have said nothing about Fear as a source of human motives. I admit the fact and would only say that fear shows itself, on close analysis, to be mainly important, in the development of the child, as a product of undue desire or longing. We learn to fear largely through learning to entertain uncontrolled longings and cravings. Thus the primary object of our fears is our emotions, or ourselves.

## CHAPTER VI

### *An Attempt at Synthesis*

“Line in nature is not found ;  
Unit and universe are round ;  
In vain produced, all rays return ;  
Evil will bless, and ice will burn.”<sup>1</sup>

“Uriel,” R. W. Emerson

**T**HERE is perhaps no single passage in any of Emerson's subtle poems that expresses his philosophy of life better than the one here quoted. The same thought underlies many of his writ-

<sup>1</sup> In the explanatory notes to Emerson's poems written by his son, E. W. Emerson, this passage occurs :

“From boyhood Emerson was familiar with ‘Paradise Lost,’ and Uriel, the bright Archangel of the Sun, would best see the vast orbits, the returns and compensations, the harmony and utter order of the Universe, — God in all. This did away with Original Sin, a separate principle of Evil, hopeless Condemnation, Mediation, — for Emerson saw in Nature a symbol. The Law was alike in matter and spirit. He had shaken off dogma and tradition and found that the Word

Still floats upon the morning wind,  
Still whispers to the willing mind.”

## HUMAN MOTIVES

ings and, among others, the striking poem "Compensation," which is quoted in part on an earlier page.

Why is it that these poems fascinate some readers and repel others? Is the attraction which they exert due only to the challenge to our wits brought by the paradoxes which they present; or do we feel that these paradoxes contain vital truths of universal application but such as lend themselves to poetical statement by reason of their subtlety?

If I can answer these questions satisfactorily, or, rather, if I can make intelligible an affirmative answer to the last question, I shall feel that I have justified the assertion made on an early page, — namely, that it ought to be possible to make a synthesis of the two groups of motives here considered, of such a sort as to bring out the best meanings of both.

Emerson's idea, which is the idea of the philosophical school of thought for which



## AN ATTEMPT AT SYNTHESIS

he stands, is that progress consists in an eternal seeking, a never-ending attempt to find ever new and richer meanings in life.

“God offers to every mind its choice between truth and repose. Take which you please, — you can never have both.”

The powerful thinker, Lessing, whose “Nathan der Weise” has stimulated speculation in so many minds, wrote, in another connection, a searching passage bearing on this problem, of which I offer here a free translation.

“If God should offer me the Truth in his right hand, and in his left hand the Search for Truth, even burdened with the condition that the search would be in vain, I would humbly take the treasure which the left hand offered, saying, “Father, here I rest my choice. Absolute Truth remains for Thee alone.”

Let no one feel mocked and disappointed by having this perpetual search held up to him as a goal. Is it not true that God

## HUMAN MOTIVES

himself, as the creative spirit of the universe, is to be thought of in these terms, — namely, as an Eternal Renewer of evolution? Is not His function the utilization of self-activity for the perpetual recreating of endless spirals leading up to self-conscious beings who have the power to conceive the whole scheme, and to make perpetually, in their turn, an ever renewed search for higher forms of self-expression? A universe constructed in this fashion implies, it is true, incessant conflict, and at times these conflicts may impress one as intolerable. But can any one formulate a universe containing free beings yet from which conflict should be excluded? This has been attempted in the past and is attempted at the present day by those who seek rest and expect to find it in another world than this. But wiser people realize that a Heaven of rest would be an intolerable prison-house, which no conceivable number of compensatory pleas-

## AN ATTEMPT AT SYNTHESIS

ures should induce us to accept. Instead of shunning conflicts, ought we not to welcome them and learn to see in them new means for gaining insight? It may be said that a doctrine of this sort is suitable perhaps for those whose lives are crowned with comfort, but that it is a cruel doctrine to apply to those on whom conflicts bear with special stress and those who have to suffer pain. It is true that the lot of such persons is hard to bear; but it has been borne innumerable times, not only with resignation, but in a better spirit still. It is idle to expect that we can understand the universal scheme in each one of its details, but unreasonable to demand that because of this inability we should reject the work of our reason altogether and refuse to see even the outline of the scheme. There are many lots which it is difficult to endure, but none that would not be lightened if the mind could get a vision of the truth, or could

## HUMAN MOTIVES

feel the influence of this truth in an intuitive or religious sense.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the outcomes proposed by Emerson, in the form of the richer meanings which the universe offers to all who will seek for them, are to be had only for the asking. To assert this would be to overlook a number of important facts. When he says that evil will bless, and (as in "Compensation") that our own best selves rush, in spite of all obstacles, to meet us, he announces what may be, not what must be. The determination of the actual outcome rests with us. When pain, adversity, sorrow, or temptation make their challenge to the human soul, they may call forth a courage and faith that seem to be born of the need for them, and thus lift the life of him who undergoes the trial to a higher plane.

One of the most typical forms of the rounding out of the circle such as Emerson refers to, with the result that what

## AN ATTEMPT AT SYNTHESIS

may be poetically defined as "evil" shall be found to bless, is given in the history of compensation as applied to conditions of organic imperfection. The deaf Beethoven expresses his power of inward hearing in symphonies which — one may assume — without his deafness he could never have produced. The blind and deaf Helen Keller discovers a world of beauty and music richer than that in which she otherwise would have lived. In a somewhat similar fashion the blinded and careworn Faust, abandoning as vain his attempt to discover happiness in merely nominal pleasures, learns at last that he has in him the power to find a better satisfaction in a life of wholly different sort.

Emerson's conception can be utilized still further as a means of clothing with a new value some of the lessons of experience. The introspection of psychoanalysis, for example, which most people object to at the outset because they con-



## HUMAN MOTIVES

sider it as equivalent to what ordinarily passes by the name of introspection, is found in the end, if all goes well, to be something very different. When we look at ourselves with morbid introspection we gain from this effort (which is really a means for securing gratification) only the intensification of an objectionable emotion. But if for this morbid scrutiny we conscientiously substitute a rational self-scrutiny, the result is useful. Every effort has in it something of reason, something of feeling, and something of will. And the more we introduce reason into this mixture, the less important, relatively speaking, becomes the part played by emotion, until, as the final outcome, the emotion itself becomes an element in the furtherance of rational effort.<sup>1</sup> In a simi-

<sup>1</sup> It was with this idea in view — the idea, namely, that the human passions and emotions should, as a rule, if rightly interpreted and assimilated, be able to contribute something of value to life in its best form — that I placed at the beginning of the account of the psycho-analytic movement (Chapter III) the



## AN ATTEMPT AT SYNTHESIS

lar fashion it is found that temptation may be converted into power, and the intolerable distress due to repressed emotions into a willingness to take one's share of the world's troubles. Self-assertion need not be cultivated for its own sake, but should be exchanged for the cultivation of power to be used for the sake of the community. Childhood ceases to be the parent of objectionable tendencies and takes its place as the emblem of all that is best in human nature.

Our real world, think of it in whatever terms we may, is a world modified and adorned by fancy, and the problem for each individual is to make it correspond to the expression of his best self and the best selves of other men. Every one longs for rest, but not for the repose of the Lotus-Eaters. The only rest that really

glowing outburst in which the Earth Spirit tells the shrinking Faust how he takes the lives of men, just as they are, and weaves them into a garment for God.

“ Nil humanum a me alienum puto.”

## HUMAN MOTIVES

satisfies is that which comes through the discovery of better adaptations between ourselves and the life around us. The justification for introducing in a book on motives the reasoning followed in this chapter is that the choice of motives, whether voluntarily or instinctively made, must depend in the final analysis on the standards arrived at through education, the true function of which consists in leading to the discovery of deeper and deeper relationships between the outside world and the inner life.

I conclude this chapter, as I began it, with a quotation from Emerson, the "Two Rivers."

"Thy summer voice, Musketaquit,<sup>1</sup>  
Repeats the music of the rain ;  
But sweeter rivers pulsing flit  
Through thee, as thou through Concord Plain.

Thou in thy narrow banks art pent :  
The stream I love unbounded goes

<sup>1</sup> "The Concord River."

## AN ATTEMPT AT SYNTHESIS

Through flood and sea and firmament ;  
Through light, through life, it forward flows.

I see the inundation sweet,  
I hear the spending of the stream  
Through years, through men, through Nature fleet,  
Through love and thought, through power and  
dream.

Musketaquit, a goblin strong,  
Of shard and flint makes jewels gay ;  
They lose their grief who hear his song,  
And where he winds is the day of day.

So forth and brighter fares my stream, —  
Who drink it shall not thirst again ;  
No darkness stains its equal gleam,  
And ages drop in it like rain.”

R. W. EMERSON.

THE END



## INDEX

- BEETHOVEN, LUDWIG VON, 164, 171.  
 Bergson, Henri, 61.  
 Bowne, Borden P., 66*n*.  
 Breuer, J., 74, 75, 85.  
 CHARCOT, J. M., 75.  
 Childhood, 78, 79, 82-84, 95; play, 96-97; development, 98-100, 153-155; education in, 105-133, 160, 161, 174; (see IMAGINATION).  
 Clough, Arthur H., 159.  
 Creative energy, 3-10, 29-34, 150, 151, 168.  
 DANTE, 16.  
 Darwin, Charles, 20, 88.  
 Dreams, 30.  
 EDUCATION, 69, 70, 92; relation to psycho-analysis, 105-133; in relation of outer to inner life, 174.  
 Egoism, table, 141; 143.  
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 27, 157, 165, 170, 171; quoted, 1, 5, 35, 47, 63, 64, 66, 120, 123, 158, 165, 167, 174-175.  
 FAGUET, E., 162.  
 Fantasies, see CHILDHOOD, IMAGINATION.  
 Fear, 164.  
 Ferenczi, S., 161.  
 Freedom, inherent in life, 10, 13, 17.  
 Freud, Sigmund, 71, 72, 74, 75, 76, 85-87, 89, 90, 92, 101.  
 Froebel, Friedrich, 96.  
 GENETIC METHOD, 20, 32.  
 Goethe, 171, 173*n*; quoted, 57, 67.  
 HARRIS, W. T., 66*n*.  
 Healy, William, 110*n*.  
 Henderson, L. J., 124.  
 Henley, W. E., 159.  
 IDEALS, as a source of motives, 10, 11, 12, 39; logical justification of, 65, 66.

## INDEX

- Imagination, table, 141;  
144-146.
- Immanence, doctrine of,  
134-139.
- Individualism, table, 141;  
156, 157.
- Infancy, see CHILDHOOD.
- JACKSON, J. HUGHLINGS,  
121, 122, 126.
- KANT, IMMANUEL, 53.
- Keller, Helen, 51, 171;  
quoted, 52.
- Keyser, C. J., 66*n*.
- Kipling, Rudyard, 159.
- LESSING, G. E., 167.
- Limitation, significance of,  
15.
- MATURITY (and immatur-  
ity), 19-21, 132, 135,  
136, 142, 158, 160.
- Motives, of constructive-  
ness, 2-10; table, 141;  
of adaptation and com-  
promise, 10-15, 94;  
table, 141; antagonistic  
sources, 1-34.
- Myths and fairy tales, 26,  
73, 83, 99, 100, 114, 132,  
142, 173.
- NIETZSCHE, 157, 158.
- PARENTS AND TEACHERS,  
value of psycho-analysis  
for, 112-116.
- Philosophic method, 18, 23;  
as contrasted with psy-  
cho-analytic method, 22-  
31.
- Physical laws, relation to  
mental laws, 55, 56, 60,  
61.
- Plato, 28.
- Psycho-analysis, general  
account of, 67-104; re-  
lation to education, 69-  
70, 105-133; practical  
aims, 106-108; thera-  
peutic action, 132, 133;  
relation to morbid intro-  
spection, 171, 172.
- RATIONALIZATION, table,  
141; 148, 149.
- Reactions, varieties of,  
compared, 123-131; of  
defense, 103, 129; (see  
also SYMPTOMS).
- Reasoning, inferential, 24,  
41; philosophic, 35-66.
- Religion, rational basis of,  
35-65; scientific criti-  
cisms of, 37, 46; relation  
to personality, 40-41;  
meaning of God, 57-58;  
popular attitude toward,  
36, 48; ceremonials, 39,  
40; superstition, 39, 40;  
(see also 165-174).
- Repression, 12, 13, 14, 71,



## INDEX

- 100-104; as affecting judgment, 22; (see also UNCONSCIOUS).
- Royce, Josiah, 56, 66*n*.
- SELF-ACTIVITY, 61, 62, 150, 168.
- Self-relation, 24, 45, 58.
- Sex emotions, 85-95.
- Shakespeare, quoted, 158.
- Sickness and health, mutual relation, 117-122.
- Social relationships, 14, 38, 39.
- Stevenson, R. L., 108.
- Symptoms, as reactions 117-133.
- UNCONSCIOUS, THE, 101, 102, 128, 129; responsibility for, 129, 130.
- Universe, personality of, 42-45; rationality of, 64, 65.
- Unpicturable world, 49-54.
- WORDSWORTH, WILLIAM, quoted, 2; 96, 153.





# MIND AND HEALTH SERIES

---

A series of medical handbooks written by eminent specialists and edited by H. ADDINGTON BRUCE and designed to present the results of recent research and clinical experience in a form intelligible to the lay public and medical profession.

**Human Motives.** By JAMES JACKSON PUTNAM, M.D., Professor Emeritus, Diseases of the Nervous System, Harvard University, Consulting Neurologist, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston. 12mo. \$1.00 *net*.

**The Meaning of Dreams.** By ISADOR H. CORIAT, M.D., First Assistant Visiting Physician, Nervous Diseases, Boston City Hospital. 12mo. \$1.00 *net*.

**Sleep and Sleeplessness.** By H. ADDINGTON BRUCE, A.M. 12mo. \$1.00 *net*.

**The Influence of Joy.** By GEORGE V. N. DEARBORN, A.M. (Harvard), Ph.D., M.D. (Columbia).

**Fear and Its Consequences.** By BORIS SIDIS, M.D., Director of the Sidis Psychotherapeutic Institute, Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

**Alcoholism, Its Causes and Its Cure.** By SAMUEL MCCOMB, D.D., Director Emmanuel Alcoholic Clinic, Boston.

**Insanity and Its Prevention.** By M. S. GREGORY, M.D., Resident Alienist, Bellevue Hospital, New York.

**Morbid Dreads.** By A. A. BRILL, M.D., Chief of Clinic in Psychiatry and Clinical Assistant in Neurology, Columbia University.

---

LITTLE, BROWN, & CO., Publishers, BOSTON











